



Muscle Matters



If you think you can be healthy and fit while neglecting the strength of your muscles, you are sadly mistaken. Many fitness enthusiasts put in hours a week on cardio equipment and don't see optimal results. They are missing the key ingredient in their workouts, muscular strength. It is one of the most important aspects of fitness. Whether your goal is to lose weight; look better; feel better; improve your sex drive; prevent osteoporosis and injury; or all of the above, you can't neglect this important aspect of your fitness program.

The secret to weight loss and the fountain of youth is strengthening your muscles. You must use them or lose them. Learning how to work them the right way can help you gain all of these benefits:

- Increase your metabolism- Muscle burns more calories than fat. The more muscle you have on your body, the more calories you burn every day; even at rest! Strength training is the only way to increase your muscle mass. You can burn an extra 200-600 calories a day. You can have your cake and eat it too without worrying about putting on extra pounds!
- Fit into your favorite jeans! - Strength training can help you to reduce the unhealthy visceral fat that deposits around your waistline area making it hard for you to zip up your favorite jeans.
- Age more gracefully- Strength training keeps you more alive and vibrant. Loss of function and mobility are not symptoms of aging; it's from lack of proper exercise. Aerobics won't prevent the loss of muscle fibers (sarcopenia) that happen as we age. You need strength training to keep your muscles and to keep your body functioning as well as it did when you were younger.
- Prevent age related diseases- Numerous studies have shown that strength training is helpful in preventing and sometimes reversing diseases like osteoporosis, sarcopenia, high blood sugar, dislypedemia, and obesity. It is also beneficial in reducing the pain associated with arthritis and low back problems.

Muscle Does Matter! By April James

April James BS Exercise Science, is a certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist from the National Strength and Condition Assoc. and a certified Health and Fitness Instructor from the American College of Sports Medicine.