

## Reasons Muscles Matter

1. **Enhance your level of functional fitness.** Your muscles play a key role in determining whether you can perform the activities of daily living at home, work, and play. Accordingly, the higher your level of muscular fitness, the more likely you will be able to do the tasks in your life without undue fatigue or risk of injury.
2. **Facilitates your efforts to control your weight.** The amount of lean muscle mass you have helps to determine your resting metabolic rate, which in turn significantly affects the number of calories you burn. All factors considered, the more muscle you have, the easier it is to keep your weight within a desirable range.
3. **Promotes bone health.** Strength training not only makes your muscles stronger, it also makes your bones stronger. Performed over an extended time, strength training has been found to increase bone density. Accordingly proper strength training will help to lower your risk of osteoporosis.
4. **Reduces your chances of sustaining both muscular and skeletal injuries.** It's estimated that a significant number of the various injuries that occur in physical activity could be prevented through a higher level of muscular fitness. In that vein, strength training can be viewed as a relatively effective and inexpensive form of personal health insurance.
5. **Slows down the so-called aging process.** Strength training enhances the ability of older adults to perform daily tasks associated with independent living. Accordingly, proper strength training can have an invaluable impact on helping senior citizens maintain their independence and personal dignity.
6. **Decreases the relative muscular demands of specific tasks.** Every physical activity requires a certain percentage of an individual's maximal level of muscular strength. For individuals who become stronger through strength training, common activities of daily living (e.g., carrying groceries, shoveling snow, lifting small children) require less effort and are easier to perform.
7. **Helps treat and prevent lower back pain.** Proper strength training can help reduce the incidence and severity of lower back pain by strengthening both your abdominal and lower back muscles. By enhancing your postural stability, keeping these muscles strong can help prevent undue load forces from being placed on your spine.
8. **Enhances your appearance.** The "fit, healthy" look is a matter of muscle tone, and an improved level of muscle tone is a by-product of proper strength training. Fortunately, substantial changes in the level of strength and tone of a muscle can occur in a relatively short period.

9. **Improves your psychological well being.** Strength training has been found to have a positive impact on your level of anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. Accordingly, strength training can have a meaningful effect on the various facets of the mind-body connection.