

Strength in the New Year

It's time to make your new resolutions. Although there are many modifications to consider that can improve your health, there is one often under-valued change that can have lasting implications on how you age. In the health arena, we are often so focused on how much weight and fat we want to lose, that we forget to see that in the big picture, we should be striving to gain the right type of weight-muscle. Muscle strength equals vitality, and in our very older years, our remaining muscle can be the difference between function and frailty. So, in this time of resolution, instead of just setting weight loss goals, consider resolving to find your strength.

Sarcopenia, or muscle wasting with age, is a phenomenon that begins early in life. With depletions in hormones, changes in muscle production, and increases in fat storage, our muscles tend to peak at around age 25. The good news is that sarcopenia is a relatively slow process for most of us, and changes from year to year can seem negligible. Risk factors too are mostly negligible, until many years have gone by. Initial complaints are often associated with the most obvious, which is a decrease in strength and mobility. Later complaints, however, are more profound and include a much higher risk factor for osteoporosis (we need muscles to pull on our bones so our bones will remain strong), and a general vulnerability that comes with frailty (for falls and decreased energy stores should the body need to fight disease).

A phenomenon known as sarcopenic obesity can also occur in apparently thin people that have a fatty infiltration where muscles used to be. This can be difficult to assess, as the person's physique can stay consistent, but their risk for obesity-related diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, increases. Muscle wasting also leads to an energy conundrum, as energy production itself gets caught in a negative feedback loop, with a lower tolerance for exercise leading to further depletion of lean tissue, which in turn leads to an even lower exercise tolerance, and a lower production of energy.

Thankfully, we are beginning to understand methods to decrease sarcopenia, and even how to improve muscle building at any age. The key is to start now with strategies to maintain muscle strength. No matter what your age, building muscle will be easier this year than next. Studies show that a primary reason for muscle wasting is a decreased intake of protein, as well as the body's blunted ability to process protein into muscle tissue. We can boost the production of muscle by increasing our protein intake. There is also an advantage to taking in easily processed forms of the back-bone of protein, known as amino acids, thereby supporting increased muscle production. The majority of us, regardless of age, can benefit by simply increasing protein. Since muscle is denser than fat, it takes a much smaller volume to equal one pound. The scale weight will increase so if you are trying to lose weight, a body composition test is needed to separate fat weight from muscle weight.

If you have difficulty with daily consumption of protein, it has been shown that protein powders or shakes, such as whey or rice, can also improve muscle retention. If the effects of sarcopenia are occurring more rapidly, or your risk factors are high, then an amino acid supplement can be considered. Readily available supplements usually include branched chained amino acids in either supplement form or within a protein powder. Processing protein and amino acids requires extra effort by the kidneys, and anyone with kidney-related disease should have their intake of proteins monitored by their treating physicians. An adequate water intake is also helpful in keeping undue stress off of the kidneys.*

The best and most substantiated method of decreasing sarcopenia is with progressive resistance training. In general, resistance training with resistance machines or free-weights should be taken to momentary muscular failure to make gains in strength. You also want your pace and weights to be appropriate so as to not induce injury. You should progressively challenge yourself to safely build muscle by reaching a perceived exertion of about 7-8 on a scale of 10 (10 being maximum) after 8-10 repetitions. After a rest, the repetitions should be repeated, and then follow a similar pattern for all the major muscle groups. Weight-bearing exercises like walking, running, yoga, or Pilates are also great ways to promote lean tissue, and again, if they involve quicker movements, fast-twitch fibers will be promoted.*

Protein synthesis (again, the building of muscles from protein) occurs even more efficiently with resistance training combined with protein intake. In fact, studies have shown that more efficient muscle building occurs when protein is consumed within 45 minutes after a workout as compared to when protein is consumed two hours or more after exercise.

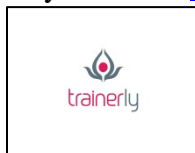
Lower energy requirements and lessening of taste bud sensitivity can also lead to a decreased appetite as we age. This can in turn lead to a decrease in the intake of micronutrients needed to properly metabolize energy and build muscle. Vitamins E, C, the B family and others have been implicated, but currently the best strategy seems to be to supplement in a general manner (such as a multiple vitamin) to fill in any gaps in nutrition.

Sarcopenia is a naturally occurring process with age. However, it is one that we can slow down, and in the process, slow aging itself. So this year, instead of standing on that scale and picking a lower number, or looking at the tags of your clothes and striving for a smaller size, perhaps you need a new strategy toward optimal health...a strategy to gain. Gain muscle, gain strength, and gain years on your life.

*To figure your requirements for water and sample strength programs, go to www.destinymgmt.com and use “destiny” for your user name and “mgmt” for the password to access all of our articles.

Please review our business at: [Yelp](#) [City Search](#) [Google +](#) [Angie's List](#)

Trainerly allows you to workout and exercise at home, office, hotel room or pretty much anywhere in the world through live 2-way webcam. [Sign-up](#) for a free class with me today.



Your suggestions appreciated to make our business better. Please take the survey by [clicking here](#) and provide your input.

Want to know your metabolic power? [Click Here](#) to find out if your metabolism is working for you or against you.

Do you know someone who might be interested in our products or services? [Click Here](#) to fill out our referral form and, as our way of saying thank you, you will receive \$15 off and of our products or services. We appreciate your support.

[Click Here](#) to sign-up for our e-mail list so can receive all of our articles & download your free copy of our Dietary Information e-book.

[Like us on Facebook](#)/[Connect with us on LinkedIn](#)/[Follow us on Twitter](#)

[Follow us on Google+](#)/[Pinterest](#)

(Hold down the Ctrl key & click the underlined words or logos)

Make sure to forward to friends and followers.



Connect with me at [Wizpert](#)