**9 Reasons Women Should Lift Weights**

There are long held beliefs that put women off resistance training, whilst many of Breedon’s weight classes are really popular with both men and women, there’s still many ladies out there that are avoiding the weights!

Perhaps you already incorporate resistance training in your programs, then you may not realise how much good you are doing for your overall health. Either way, read on!

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Let’s start with the myths: lifting heavy weights makes women bulky, it's dangerous, it's bad for your joints, and once you have muscle, you can't stop lifting or it will all turn to fat. I’m sure you’ve heard at least one of these?

The great news is that ***none of these are true*** and in fact the benefits are worth overcoming any concerns you may have about introducing weights into your program as they contribute to a healthier, stronger body.

Just to address the most common concern I come across, ***“I don’t want to look like a weight lifter!”***It is physically impossible for women to bulk up their muscles unless following a specific program to achieve this. High levels of oestrogen make it very difficult for women to become overly muscular if this is not what you want to achieve, the changes to their muscles are generally related to tone, strength, and endurance rather than size. The resulting look is firm, feminine toning, not bulky muscles.

Now sit down, grab a cuppa as these are the amazing benefits:

1. **More Effective Fat Loss**

Although many people consider weightlifting only a means to add size, when compared to doing just cardiovascular exercise, adding resistance training boosts the calorie burn.

The huge advantage to weight training is your body's ability to burn fat during and after exercise. After a quality session of strength training, you continue to consume additional oxygen in the hours and even days that follow. This is known as excess post-exercise oxygen consumption, or EPOC.

When your body uses more oxygen, it requires more caloric expenditure and an increased metabolic rate.

1. **Increased Calorie Expenditure**

Research shows that 1lb of muscle uses 7 to 10 calories per day, while 1lb of fat uses only 2 to 3 calories per day. These don’t sound much but multiplied to take into account the whole body and that’s a big difference! As you increase strength and lean muscle mass, your body uses more energy even when you are not exercising.

### Preserves muscle mass

Muscle mass diminishes with age. You can counteract this loss through strength training. The percentage of fat on your body increases as you get older if you don’t do anything to replace the lean muscle you lose. Strength training helps preserve and enhance your muscle mass, regardless of your age.

### Decreases injury risk

### When you build muscle, you help protect your joints from injury and increase your balance and coordination. Whilst this is important whatever your age, this becomes increasingly important to help you maintain your independence and overall health throughout your life.

1. **Quality Sleep**

Strength training greatly improves sleep quality, aiding in your ability to fall asleep faster, sleep deeper, and wake less often during the night. A study published in the International SportMed Journal suggests that morning resistance training or high intensity training greatly affects the quality of sleep and lengthens the time of sleep the night after training.

1. **Increased Energy**

As noted above, resistance training causes an increase in energy expenditure hours after you train. A study published by the National Institute of Health suggests that the chronic increase in energy expenditure, even after a minimal resistance training session, may favourably effect energy balance and fat oxidation. Rather than reaching for that early afternoon cup of coffee, grab a barbell!

1. **Heart Health**

Pumping iron can reduce your risk of heart disease and was approved as a healthy form of exercise for those at risk from the American Heart Association. A study in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning found that those who lift weights are less likely have heart disease risk factors such as a large waist circumference, high triglycerides, elevated blood pressure, and elevated glucose levels.

Another study conducted by researchers in Brazil found that though the heart rate increased in patients during heavy bouts of training, their blood pressure and resting heart rate were significantly lower the following morning.

1. **Bone Health**

As you age, you are at risk of losing both bone and muscle mass. Postmenopausal women are at a greater risk for osteoporosis because the body no longer secretes oestrogen. Resistance training is an excellent way to combat loss of bone mass, and it decreases the risk of osteoporosis.

All of us want to feel strong, determined, and confident in everything we do.

A study conducted at McMaster University found that after a year of resistance training, postmenopausal women increased spinal bone mass by 9 percent. The earlier you begin weightlifting, the greater chance you have to maintain bone health later in life.

1. **Stress Relief**

Exercise in general is a great way to manage stress. Researchers have consistently found that those who regularly strength train tend to manage stress better and experience fewer adverse reactions to stressful situations as those who do not exercise.

In addition, resistance-training studies on older adults show that moderate intensity weightlifting improves memory and cognitive function. Next time you need to blow off some steam, hit the weights!

If you’re unsure how to introduce resistance training or want to mix up what you are currently achieving, then get in touch, for a gym program review or you are interested in Personal Training.

Study References available