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Strength training is the ticket to living longer — and you don't need to do much

by Ashley Mateo

Doing muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week can be the key to a healthier and longer life.



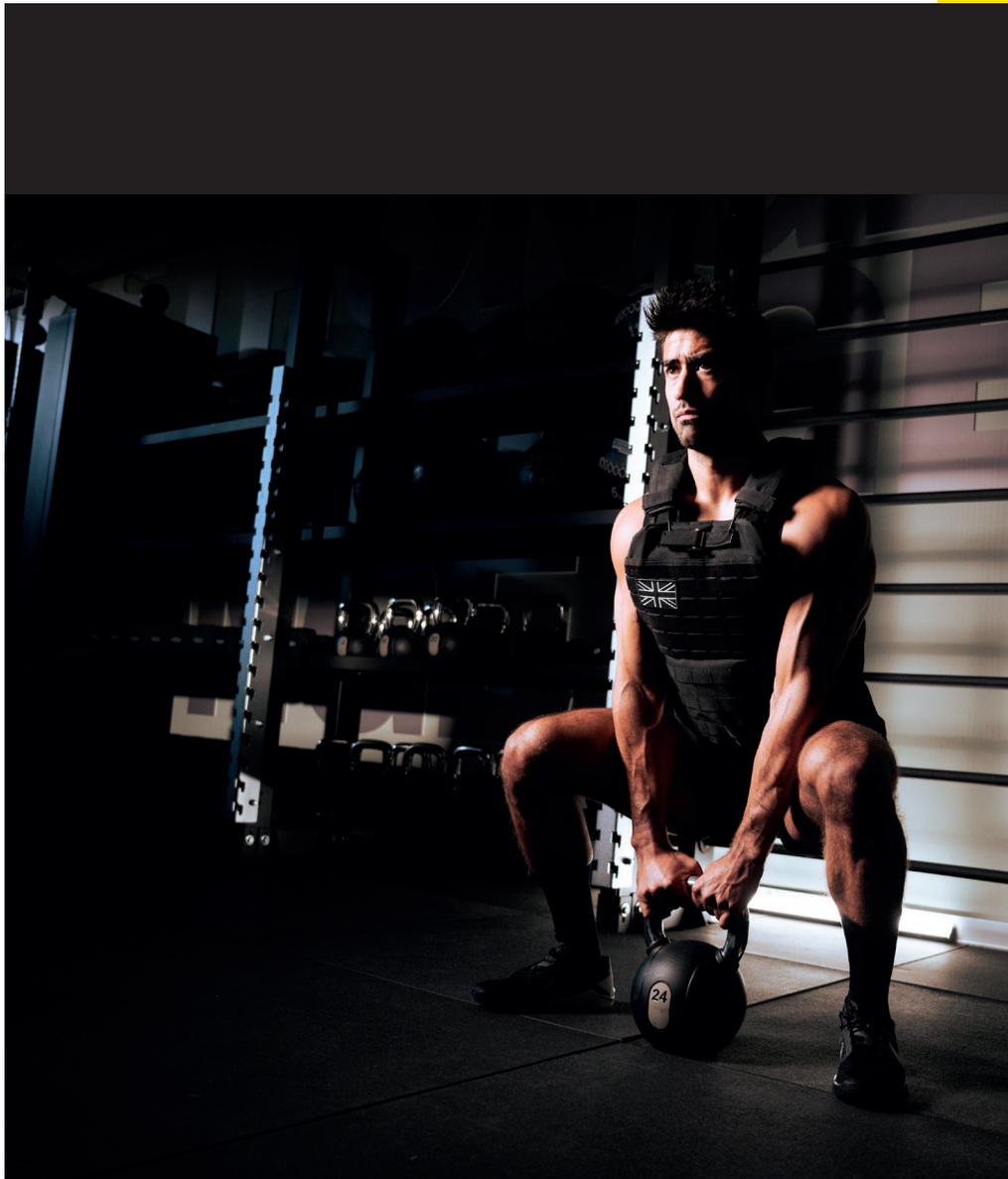


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The internet is full of biohackers hawking all kinds of “healthy” shortcuts to allegedly help people extend their lifespan. But **longevity** is less about superfood supplement powders, obsessive fitness tracking, and ice baths, and more about the simple stuff, like **regular physical activity**, a **balanced diet**, and **getting enough sleep**.

One of the easiest ways **to extend your lifespan** is to simply **hit the gym**. Muscle mass decreases approximately three to eight percent per decade after the age of 30, and older people could lose between one-quarter and one-third of muscle strength over a decade, which would seriously impact quality of life, older research shows. As a counterpoint, muscle-strengthening activities were associated with almost **a 20 percent lower risk of** cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, lung cancer, and **all-cause mortality**, according to a 2022 meta-analysis published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* that looked at 16 different studies and data from over 1.5 million subjects.

Turns out, you don’t even need to spend much time lifting to reap those rewards. Generally, physical activity guidelines—like those from the World Health Organization—promote doing muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week. But recent research suggests you don’t even need to train that often to see health benefits.





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Just a **single strength session per week**—with one set of six to 15 repetitions at 30 to 80 percent of someone’s one-rep maximum (or the most amount of weight they can lift for a single rep of a given exercise) using multi-joint functional movements—may be enough **for beginners** to improve physical fitness, at least for the first 12 weeks of training, research published in *Sports Medicine* in November 2023 determined. Compared to more targeted single joint exercises, this kind of “**minimalist strength training**” uses exercises such as squats, deadlifts, or the bench press to recruit more muscles at once, so you’re getting more bang for your buck with every rep (imagine doing a bicep curl versus a bench press). That makes them more time-efficient and more applicable to real life, because these exercises better mimic the way people move when performing daily activities—think of how similar a deadlift is to picking a heavy bag of groceries off the ground.

You also don’t actually need a ton of equipment to really challenge your body. Replacing traditional resistance training exercises with **minimal-equipment alternatives** similarly improved muscle thickness and fat-free mass, countermovement jump, aerobic capacity (VO2max), and Army Combat Fitness Test performance, another study, published in December 2023 in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* found. In the study, which consisted of four workouts per week over six weeks, participants swapped barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, and machines for a weighted vest, sandbags, a set of resistance bands, and a TRX suspension trainer—all much more portable (and affordable) options. While strength improvements were greater with traditional equipment, minimal-equipment resistance training did improve performance and body composition.

Minimal doses of strength training—which, from a scientific perspective, combine lower volume session with higher training intensities performed at lower frequencies or lower training intensities performed at higher frequencies and with minimal-to-no equipment (AKA resistance ‘exercise snacking’)—not only **improve strength and functional ability** in younger and older adults, they also have the potential to **minimize various barriers to participation**, a 2022 review published in *Sports Medicine* revealed.

That’s great news, because strength training can seem intimidating, especially without a personal trainer or coach guiding the process. No matter if someone is in a gym, a class, or working out at home, quality trumps quantity in strength training—dialing in the correct load, number of repetitions, recovery time, speed of execution, posture, and range of motion for each exercise optimizes even shorter sessions. But that’s a lot of guesswork for anyone who’s not a fitness expert, so Technogym’s Biostrength line uses revolutionary aerospace technology powered by AI to adapt to ensure maximum neuromuscular activation for any user’s fitness level, essentially removing personal responsibility from the equation.

The Biostrength line offers **six different workload modes** and **four programs** that help develop muscle mass, increase strength, train explosive strength and to express maximum force, and get more muscle tone with less effort. (More advanced users can use the custom function or free training mode.) Whichever option a user chooses, the Biodrive system makes training safer and more effective—for example, the spotter function can recognize when someone is too tired and automatically reduce the load to allow them to complete the set. This kind of precision training can lead to 30 percent better results in the same amount of time compared to classic training with equipment or free weights.

For most people—especially those who are newer to strength training and prioritizing health benefits over maximal gains—it pays to keep it simple. Minimal training isn’t just about doing less, it’s about **training smart** so you can maximize the time you have and still see the benefits you want.



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