



## Strength Training - What is that?

**With the abundance of choice that we have, when it comes to choosing exercise options, it can be hard to decide what's important to add in to a workout.**

At the end of the day, moving and being active in any way is a great start. However specific types of exercise have some pretty awesome benefits, and strength training is one. Strength training is exercise that uses some form of resistance to make muscles contract which builds strength, anaerobic endurance, and muscle size and shape.

Examples include using weights and machines at a gym but you can also strength train using bodyweight exercises and more portable exercise equipment.

Many of the overall life increasing and improving benefits of exercise can be gained through strength training, but there are some specific benefits that make adding some resistance to your workout worthwhile.

- Regular strength training can increase bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Strength training can assist with weight management as it can increase your metabolism which will help you burn more calories.
- Strength training makes your life easier by improving your ability to do a range of everyday activities.
- Balance is improved with stronger muscles which can reduce risk of falls. This is especially important for older adults who risk losing independence with lack of strength and balance.
- Many ongoing physical health conditions can be managed better and reduced by regular strength training.

The important factor in strength training is making the most of progression. Progression simply means that as you get stronger you are able to do more and lift more weights, and should do so to continue to get improvements. When starting out you don't need to do the hardest pushups, or reach for the biggest weights. As long as the exercise takes some work to complete, you are on the right track.

Getting started, and making improvements is also where an exercise professional comes in. By getting advice from someone who is qualified and experienced, you can make sure the exercises you choose are the best fit for your exercise and fitness level.

Many people find using a dedicated exercise facility (like a gym or exercise studio) is the way to go to do their strength training. They will have a range of equipment you wouldn't have available otherwise, and help is on hand when you need it.

However, if you are looking at working out at home or somewhere other than an exercise facility, then you can get your strength training workout with the help of some easily found tools. The easiest is of course your own bodyweight. Whether it's squats, lunges, pushups or one of the endless variety of exercises, there's no reason you can't get your exercise by using you. There is a large range of portable resistance equipment available, from rubber tubing through to suspension cables and other specialist equipment. Before you head out and invest in too much gear, it's worth getting some advice on how to use it, and in fact whether you should use it at all.

At the end of the day, some form of strength training will have a range of benefits. However if you are looking at investing time and money into your health, make sure you are staying safe. Reduce your chance of injury, and to get the best results – make sure you use a REPs registered exercise professional ([www.reps.org.nz](http://www.reps.org.nz)).

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### Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

**NZ Register of Exercise Professionals**, Registrar Stephen Gacsal

Email: [stephen@reps.org.nz](mailto:stephen@reps.org.nz) telephone: 0800 55 44 99 website: [www.reps.org.nz](http://www.reps.org.nz)

**NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)** - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - [www.icreps.org](http://www.icreps.org)

**Exercise Association of New Zealand**, Chief Executive Richard Beddie

Email: [richard@exercisenz.org.nz](mailto:richard@exercisenz.org.nz), telephone: 0800 66 88 11 website: <http://www.exercisenz.org.nz>

**Exercise Association of New Zealand** - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

