

# Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

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Hi Everyone!

There was a time when resistance training was considered the domain of footballers, body builders and men who just wanted to get big. How times have changed; these days resistance training is recommended for everyone, men and women alike, as there are many health benefits to be gained from lifting weights, resistance band workouts, and using body weight as resistance. Let's look at these benefits:

- Each added kilo of muscle increases your basal metabolic rate. This means you will burn more calories even when sleeping. Not only does it help control weight but helps you look good too.
- An increase in muscle mass (or strength) results in improved performance of activities such as climbing stairs, carrying objects and gardening. The more efficient the body becomes at strenuous activities, the less tired you will feel.
- Resistance training builds up the muscles around the joints. This aids in reducing wear and tear of the joints and results in healthier joints as well as improved posture.
- As muscles increase their strength, so do the bones. Therefore resistance training minimises disorders such as osteoporosis and osteopenia.
- Resistance training improves transfer and take up of energy by the cells which helps control blood sugar. This reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- Other benefits are a reduced risk of developing some cancers, improved immune function and elevated mood.

So make sure you include resistance training into your fitness program twice a week if possible. Two one-hour sessions with a day or two's rest in between would be ideal.

If you are new to exercise, check with your GP that resistance training is suitable for your needs before commencing a program. You should first learn to activate your core muscles. These are the deep stabilizing muscles that support the lower back and tummy. Start with small weights and concentrate on your form. Make sure you get instructions from a qualified personal trainer so that you are working correctly. Lifting weights incorrectly could cause injury.

Before each session you need to warm up first. This could be a brisk walk for 10 minutes or peddling a bike. After training cool down with some stretches as this will lengthen those muscles that were tightened during training and help reduce muscle soreness. It is normal to get some muscle soreness after strength training so if you do feel a little sore after a workout that means you've gained some of the benefits listed above. Don't let a little soreness discourage you. Even if you don't exert yourself enough to experience muscle soreness, you are still gaining benefits. Be strong!

Yours in health,

*Jeni*

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