- Exercise

Seven errors to avoid when strength training as a senior

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Strength training is particularly important for maintaining health and independence in your golden years. When done correctly, it can play a key role in preserving bone density and building muscle – both of which can greatly enhance our overall quality of life. So, what do we need to know before we get started? Here are seven common mistakes to watch out for when starting strength training as a senior...



1. Starting too heavy

“Our muscles, bones and connective tissues take time to adapt to resistance training, so if you start with weights that are too heavy it creates unnecessary injury risk. It can also encourage poor movement patterns that are harder to correct later,” explains Michael Betts, personal trainer and director of TRAINFITNESS. Michael advises seniors to start off with body weight exercises or very light weights, adding: “Aim for 12-15 reps with perfect form before starting to think about increasing the weight.”

2.

“Prioritise slow, controlled movements over the amount of resistance or number of repetitions,” advises Leo

Mathew, physiotherapist and rehabilitation service lead at Nellsar Care Homes. “Good technique helps prevent injuries.”

This is why seeking professional advice when starting out can be extremely beneficial.

Repetitions over technique

Always begin new exercises with caution and progress slowly Leo Mathew, physiotherapist

3.

“A lot of seniors jump straight into lifting before addressing issues like tight hips, rounded shoulders or limited mobility in their ankles which have developed from years of sitting,” says Michael

He recommends spending 10-15 minutes before a weights session working on dynamic stretches and mobility exercises. ercises.

Forgetting to warm-up

4. n It’s important to o listen to your body when starting your regime. “Always begin n

Ignoring pain

new exercises with caution and progress slowly," recommends Leo. "Stop immediately if experiencing new pain, dizziness, or sharp discomfort - never force through these symptoms. Take advice if required."

5.

"Include single-leg exercises, standing exercises and movements that challenge your stability. Simple progressions like standing on one foot, single-leg dead lifts or standing exercises with eyes closed help maintain the balance systems that naturally decline with age" says Michael.

6.

Neglecting balance Not allowing time for recovery

"Allow adequate rest during your exercise to improve strength, endurance and recovery," advises Mathew. "Allow 2-3 rest days per week for muscle repair. Stay wellhydrated and eat nutritious foods to support and fuel recovery, performance and to maintain quality of life."

7. Not eating enough protein Sam Quinn, personal training lead at Nuffield Health, says: "We naturally maintain less muscle mass as we get older, and consuming the correct amount of protein to support our physical health and exercise goals is even more important. Between 1.1-2g of protein per kg of body weight is recommended to build strength and recover from your workouts." Good Goo sources of protein prote include lean meats, mea poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, prod beans, lentils, len tofu, nuts and an seeds.