

# YOUR CARE POLMED

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## 3 reasons why you should get stronger



While some may associate strength training with bulging muscles and intense gym schedules, this form of exercise can be done at home and has significant benefits.

### Will strength training make me bulky?

Many women avoid strength training because they fear that it will make them bulky. However, this could not be further from the truth.

Generally, women will not bulk up like men because they do not have as much testosterone, which helps to build muscle in men. A woman's hormonal profile allows her to use strength training to tone, without getting bulky.



### Benefits of strength training



#### 1. Reduced back pain and risk of injury

Lower back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide, affecting an estimated 540 million people at any one time.

Strength training exercises help to strengthen and stabilise your core, and doing so, helps reduce back pain. Strength training can also help to reduce your risk of injury. This is especially important if you lead an active lifestyle.



#### 2. Helps manage diabetes

It is important to properly manage your diabetes because not doing so can increase the risk of complications that include heart disease, vision loss, and amputations.

When you perform strength training exercises, your body uses glucose from your bloodstream to power them, which can help clear out excess sugar from your system.

Studies have also found that moderate strength training and an increase in overall muscle mass reduce a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 32%.



#### 3. Better bone health

Osteoporosis refers to the loss of bone density and the decline of bone integrity. This results in fragile bones, increasing the risk of fractures of the hip, spine and wrist. There is an osteoporosis fracture approximately every 3 seconds in the world, resulting in over 10 million fractures a year.

Thankfully, you can protect your bone health through strength training as it can help slow down bone loss as well as build bone, reducing the risk of fractures.

"Strength training helps you be more functional as you get older and helps with climbing stairs, standing up from a chair, and getting up off the floor" explains biokineticist Travis Michelson.

### Strength training at home

You do not need expensive gym equipment and there are many exercises that you can do at home to build strength.



#### 1. Upper body - Bent-over row\*

- Holding dumbbells, lean forward, knees slightly bent and try to keep your back flat
- Extend your arms down, lift the dumbbells straight up to your chest
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you lift the dumbbells
- Keep your elbows in, pointed upward and try not to arch your back
- Slowly lower the weights back to the starting position
- Complete 10-15 repetitions depending on your strength level

\* If you do not have any dumbbells, you can use household items, including:

- Bag of rice - weighs between 500 g and 2 kg
- 2 litre water bottle - either filled with water or sand and can weigh around 5 kg
- Textbooks - the thicker the textbook, the heavier the weight



#### 2. Lower body - Squat

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart
- Bend at your hips and knees, lowering down, keeping your head and chest lifted
- Stop when your thighs are parallel to the floor
- Contract your upper leg muscles and stabilize your body
- Slowly stand back up without locking the knees and repeat for 10-15 repetitions
- When you can complete 2-3 sets comfortably, try to add some weight

Strength training - at home or the gym - is a great way to build strength and also helps to protect your health.



### References

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If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to [polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za) with your membership number and contact details.