



Hammer curls work the inner bicep head

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HAT? Weight train and me? Though a growing trend in cities, the Indian woman still harbours the fear that weight training might bulk her up, taking away her femininity. Not so. Within limits, strength training actually adds to feminine grace and visual

appeal. Luckily, these confusing notions are gradually evaporating as women of all ages are experiencing the benefits of resistance training.

Research has repeatedly shown that women who moderately strength train on a regular basis enjoy an unending list of health advantages.

Why Weight Train?

While this was earlier considered a man's domain, it's a fabulous way for women to train, rendering fast results. Weight training increases muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, bone density, endurance and ligament and cartilage thickness. It is an outstanding method of sculpting the body as it decreases subcutaneous



Bent-over rows will strengthen up the spinal muscles

SHOULD YOU WEIGHT TRAIN?

Weight training doesn't always bulk you up, instead it might increase your feminine grace and add to your appeal.

By Nawaz Modi Singhania

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body fat. It is a natural cure for osteoporosis in women. Weight training also aids performance in sports, especially for swimmers, athletes and performers; and reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and low-back pain.

Muscle training: Also relieves tension and stress; increases self-confidence; improves sleep; induces discipline and motivation; increases cardiovascular fitness, life expectancy, haemoglobin levels and red blood cell count; normalises blood pressure; decreases cholesterol levels; increases power and speed; and alertness; improves reflex actions; decreases menstrual pain; corrects menstrual disorders; improves posture and increases fertility.

It is also a great form of rehabilitation for the injured or handicapped.

Other Specific Advantages:

* **FAT AND INCH LOSS:** Research shows that depending on your programme and level of commitment, you can lose approximately one kg of fat per month initially.

Weight training increases your metabolism. In other words, you'll start burning a lot more calories than before, both at rest and otherwise. For every 450 g of muscle you gain, you'll be burning approximately 35 - 50 more calories on a daily basis. So, for instance, if you gain 1.36 kg of muscle and burn off 45 extra calories per 450 g, you'll be burning 135 more calories per day. This approximately means about 4,000 more calories per month, which in turn amounts to a loss of 5.45 kg in one year!

* **STRONGER LOWER BACK:** A recent 12-year study demonstrated that strengthening the lower-back muscles with a combination of strengthening and stretching exercises had an 80 per cent success rate in eliminating or reducing low-back pain.

* **A HEALTHIER HEART:** Your cholesterol profile and blood pressure status will improve, contributing to a healthier heart. You'll get the most out of your programme by combining this with cardiovascular activity.

* **DIABETES CONTROL:** Adult-onset diabetes is a growing problem for women and men. Studies show that weight training can increase glucose utilisation in the body by 23 in four months time.

* **HELP WITH ARTHRITIS:** Joints are

strengthened, pain is reduced, and joint and muscle flexibility are improved.

* IMPROVED ATHLETIC ABILITY:

Strength training improves athletic ability. Whatever your choice of sport, strength training will improve your proficiency, and decrease your risk of injury. Moderate weight training increases a woman's strength by 30 to 50 per cent. This makes going through the whole day a lot easier, with a deal more energy and alertness at the end of each day than before.

Numerous women have been trained even in their 70s and 80s. Studies show that strength improvements are possible at any age.

A strength training professional should always supervise a senior participant.

And No, You Won't Bulk Up

No, you're not going to end up looking like something on the cover of 'Muscle and Fitness'! Unlike men, women don't typically bulk up or gain size because compared to men, women lack in the male hormone testosterone, which, among other things, causes one to bulk up. You'll gain lean, long muscles, not large bulky ones.

Calf raises will tone and strengthen your calves

A Few Tips

* **Progress gradually:** Begin slowly; don't try taking on too much too soon.

* **Plan your work, and then work your plan:** Prioritise goals, and set realistic time frames within which to achieve them. Work the detail of this out with your trainer. Track your progress using various methods such as a body fat monitor, the measure tape or fitness testing.

* **Rotate exercises:** Change your routine every four to six weeks for maximum effectiveness. This'll add more meaning, effectiveness and excitement to your routine.

It's important to obtain medical clearance before embarking on a routine, along with any advice (in terms of recommendations or restrictions) from your medical practitioner. Ensure a fitness professional's supervision at all times.

Happy pumping!

