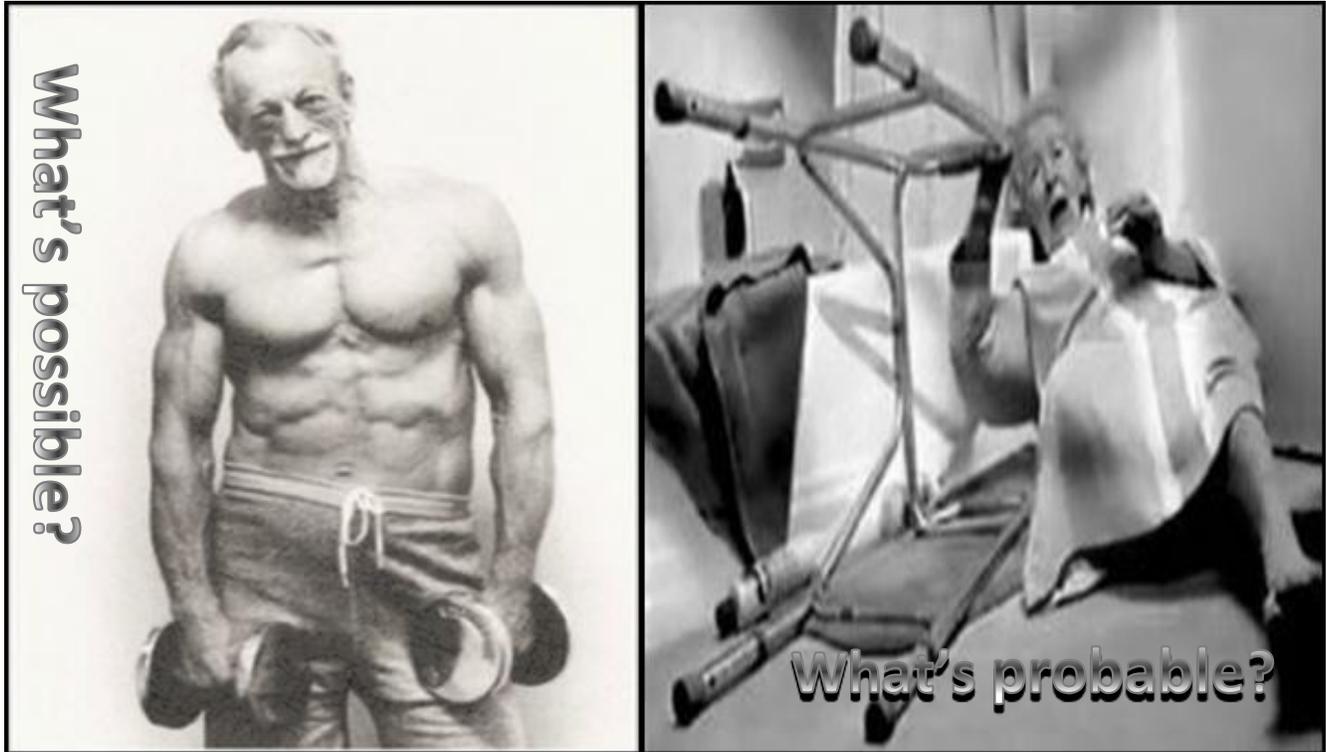


Two Shades of Gray?



This is a story about the importance of strength training. It's called, *Two Shades of Gray*. Here's a [link](#) if you want to have the story read to you.

I want to tell you a story. It's called, *Two Shades of Gray*. The tale I'm going to tell you isn't as sexy as the novel, "*50 Shades of Grey*". However, I still think it should be required reading because it is about surviving and trying to thrive in today's modern mechanized world. I want to talk to you about the importance of strength training. It's just one piece of the puzzle. But, it can be an essential part of the big picture.

Strengthening or resistive exercise includes activities like weight training or calisthenics. It entails resisting the movement, so that you can only do a limited number of continuous repetitions. It is effective at developing strength and muscle mass. Strength is necessary for you to have the capability to do the physical things that you need or want to do. The value of muscle isn't limited to strength. Muscle is also related to metabolism. Maintaining or building muscle will make it easier to manage weight. Conditioned muscle is also beneficial for preventing or dealing with chronic disease processes like diabetes and atherosclerosis.

If you don't give your muscles a good reason to stick around by challenging them regularly, you will lose them. Our bodies are conditioned to the level of the demands that we place upon them. You are living on the edge if you are just involved in low intensity activities of daily life, because you are only conditioned to those minimal demands. As a result, you are working at a high percentage of your capability just to get through your day. You are likely to be fatigued before the day ends and unlikely to try to do any more than you really need to do. Not exactly the definition of optimal vitality. Since you have no reserve to rely upon, if your activity levels diminish any further, because of an illness or injury, and you lose just a little more fitness, you will find yourself in a position where you can't even do those essential activities. When you lead a sedentary lifestyle, it's easier than you would think to find yourself in the situation where you've fallen and can't get back up.

According to the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) an exercise plan should include both cardio and strengthening exercises. The great thing about resistive exercise is that it doesn't have to take a lot of time to be involved in a selection of exercises to build or maintain the muscles of the body. A single strengthening exercise can be completed in less than two minutes. They only need to be done on 2 or 3 well-spaced days per week. A selection of exercises that involves all of the major muscles or motions of the musculoskeletal system could be done in less than 15 minutes. A routine might include a [pushing outward](#) and a [pulling backward](#) motion for the upper body, a [leg pressing motion](#) for the lower body and a [back bending](#) and [back straightening motion](#) for the torso.

We have traditionally focused on the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" In today's modern mechanized world, another question we need to put far more emphasis on is, "Who do you want to be when you grow old?" To improve the chances that your life story ends happily, or at least includes the physical capabilities required to continue to live independently, get started with a program of resistive exercises now. Why weight? Start preparing for your retirement today. [Meet Frances Woofenden](#)

Here are a few links to give you some ideas for simple strength training –

[Exercise is Medicine – Keys to Exercise - Strength](#) from the American College of Sports Medicine

[Tufts University's Growing Stronger – Strength Training for Older Adults](#) (The information is also appropriate for younger adults.)

[Strength Training: How to video collection](#) from the Mayo Clinic

[PUSH – PULL progressions](#) from the program web page

[SQUAT – LIFT progression](#) from the program web page

[TWIST – CORE exercises](#) from the program web page