



# The New Rules of Strength Training Over 50

By Dave Durell, MS, PTA

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[StrengthAfter50.com/NewRules](https://StrengthAfter50.com/NewRules)

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**Important Notice:** All forms of exercise pose some inherent risk. Readers assume full responsibility for their safety and knowing their limits. The exercise programs in this book are not intended as a substitute for any exercise routine or dietary regimen that may have been prescribed by your doctor. As with all exercise programs, you should get your doctor's approval before beginning.

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# Introduction

Let's face it – we're not kids anymore.

Once you get over 50, you start feeling the effects of age-related wear and tear on your body. Injuries from the past are coming back to haunt you. You might have gone through one or more surgeries, or possibly even dealt with some disease process.

The aging process seems to be working against us – and nowhere is this more noticeable than in the gym.

By now you can probably tell that the strength training routines you used in your 20's aren't cutting it anymore. Your body is different now. The chest exercises you fell in love with back then now make your shoulders sore for 3 days. Your favorite leg exercise now causes too much knee pain to use any real weight. And there's no way you can make it through the 2-hour workouts you used to do back in the day.

But if you're like me, strength training has been something you've enjoyed since you were a kid. You love not only the physical benefits of looking better and functioning better, but also that feeling of achievement and self-mastery that comes from the process of successfully becoming stronger and more muscular.

And you want to keep going with it, but it just doesn't seem to be working like it used to.

It can all be very frustrating, and you might be feeling a bit discouraged about the future. Now that the kids are grown and your career is winding down, you're going to have the time and resources to do fun stuff and create lasting memories – *but will you be physically able to?*

Listen, you deserve to be able to truly live and enjoy your "Golden Years", not have to suffer through them.

Let's get you on the path to a strength training program that is tailor made for YOU, as you are now, that you'll be able to sustain forever as you fight the physical effects of the aging process.

I'll guide you through some new rules of strength training, specifically designed for people over 50 that you can start applying right now, the very next time you work out.

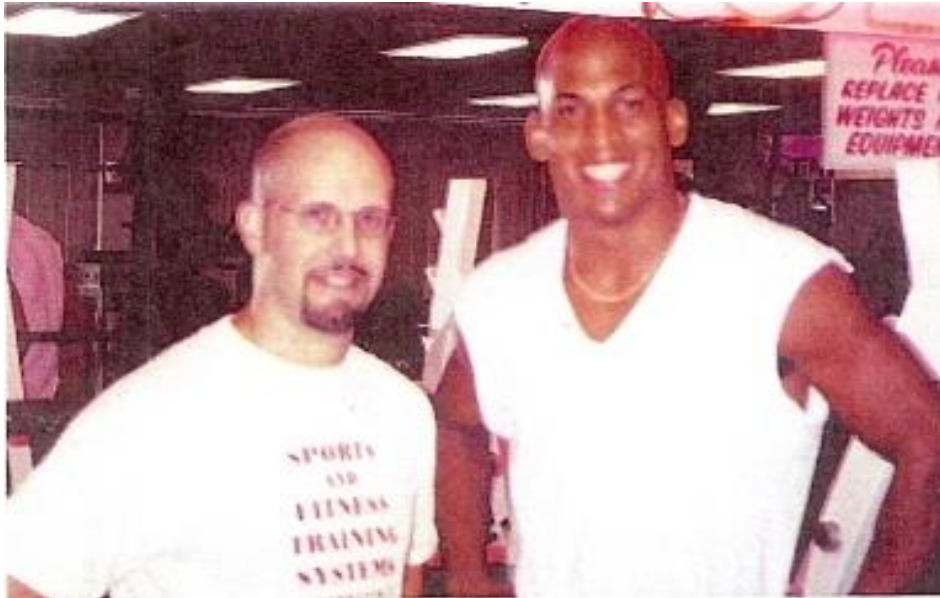
## **Who am I, and why should you listen to me?**

My name is Dave Durell, and I've been in the Health and Fitness industry since 1982. I have spent the last 40+ years working as a personal trainer, fitness studio owner, Division 1 and NFL Strength and Conditioning Coach, and licensed Physical Therapist Assistant.

Over that time I've successfully trained hundreds of personal training clients, rehabilitated thousands of physical therapy patients after injuries and surgeries, and helped the top athletes in the world stay on the field and compete at the highest level.



**My all-time oldest personal training client, Bob S. – age 96!**



**Training Super Bowl XXXIV Champion Keith Lyle**



**Physical Therapy with plane crash survivor Diana Burgess**

Through this unique combination of experience, I've discovered not only the most effective methods of building strength and muscle, but also how to rebuild injured body parts and prevent future injuries. I've combined these methods to create the ideal strength training program for those over 50, like you.

And just like you, I'm over 50 myself (actually, 65 as I'm writing this). I know exactly what strength training feels like now for folks our age, and based on my background and experience I know exactly what training adjustments to make for us to get the best possible results in our 50's, 60's and beyond.

I'm constantly studying, testing, and refining new training protocols and techniques, always trying to improve my workout programs. And I created [StrengthAfter50.com](https://StrengthAfter50.com) to be able to share this knowledge and help people over 50 throughout the world stay strong and live a full life.

And now I'd like to help you.

In this report, we'll cover 5 new rules specifically designed to help you get the best possible value out of the time you spend strength training. Each rule will be explained, then I'll summarize the rule (in a gray text box using bullet points) with action steps you can apply to your current workout routine right now, the very next time you work out, that will compensate for age-related limitations, avoid new injuries, and rebuild old ones.

Also in the gray text boxes at the end of each section, you will find links to the instructional videos which demonstrate the techniques described. Just click on the link and you'll be instantly taken to the videos. ([CLICK HERE](#) to go to the video web page).

Moving forward, you'll be able to work out without pain, build and maintain a high level of strength and muscle mass at any age, and overcome any physical barriers standing in the way of you living your fullest life in your later years.

**Let's get started with New Rule #1.**

## **#1. The New Rule of Rep Speed: Lift Slow, Lower Even Slower.**

For your workouts to be as safe and productive as possible, we need to start with the performance of the most basic element of the workout – the repetition.

On every rep of every set, your goal is to move the weight through the force of muscular contraction alone. You don't want any outside forces, like momentum, moving the weight for you.

Using muscle force only to move the weight makes the exercise hard on the muscles and easy on the joints – and that's good!

Incorporating the force of momentum to move the weight by throwing, jerking, or bouncing it, makes the exercise easy on the muscles and hard on the joints – that's bad!

## **So the new rule of rep speed breaks down like this:**

Begin each repetition slowly and smoothly; no fast or explosive starts, just gradually increase the force you're exerting until the weight moves, then keep it moving.

Lift the weight under full muscular control – don't throw it. The lifting phase should take about 2 seconds.

Lower the weight even slower, in about 4 seconds – don't drop it. Your muscles are stronger on the lowering phase, and if you just let the weight drop you are wasting the rep!

When that rep is finished and you're starting the next rep, change direction smoothly, without any rebound or slamming the weight stack, keeping constant tension on the working muscles.

Repeat for the entire set, making every rep look exactly the same as the preceding one.

When you slow your reps down like this, you will feel a deep muscle stimulation like you've never felt before!

### **ON YOUR NEXT WORKOUT:**

- On every rep, start lifting the weight slowly without jerking it.
- Lift the weight to the finish position in about 2 seconds without using momentum.
- Lower the weight in about 4 seconds.
- Change direction slowly when you start the next rep, without bouncing or slamming the weights.
- Keep constant tension on the working muscles the whole time to maximize the muscle building effects while sparing your joints.
- If in doubt about your exact speed, go slower, never faster.
- [Click HERE for the rep speed video](#)

## #2. The New Rule of Range of Motion: Limit the Stretch, Focus on Contraction.

If you have any strength training experience at all, you've probably heard the term "full range of motion".

Range of motion means the measurement of movement around a joint. The full movement potential of a joint is its full range of motion. And most of us have been taught somewhere along the line that we should utilize a full range of motion in all our strength training exercises.

That means moving the weight from a fully stretched position all the way to the other end of the range of motion, which is the position of full muscular contraction. But through my own training experience, as well as training people over 50 for many years, I've discovered we now need a slightly enhanced definition to guide our training efforts.

Our new guideline is to utilize a full safe and pain free range of motion with our strength training exercises. And *as a rule*, this involves limiting the stretch position, and emphasizing the fully contracted position.

### Limit the Stretch

The reason for this is to reduce the risk of injury. When in the fully stretched position, our joint structures are at a mechanical disadvantage, and are less stable. Any break in your exercise form while in this position, such as a sudden, jerky movement, altered body positioning, or being too fatigued to continue the exercise, and you could be looking at an injury that will set your progress back for days, weeks or even months.

These injuries include ligament sprains, muscle strains, and connective tissue tears. Continued over the long term, overstretching can cause painful chronic inflammation.

The shoulders, knees, hips and back are especially vulnerable. Common culprits are many popular chest exercises and pushing exercises with the legs.





**The Wrong Way-Shoulder Overstretched**



**The New Way-Limited Stretch**



**The Wrong Way-Knees Overstretched**



**The New Way-Limited Stretch**

So from now on, I want you to determine a **comfortable** stretch position for every exercise. If it's difficult or painful for you to get into a machine or reach the stretch position during the exercise, you're going too far. Strength training is supposed to help you, not hurt you.

## **Focus on Contraction**

At the opposite end of each repetition is the fully contracted position. This where all the action is for increasing muscular strength and size. At the most basic foundational level, a productive strength training workout is made up of high intensity muscular contractions on every rep of every exercise.

Muscles produce movement by contracting, or shortening. When you are lifting a weight, muscle fibers are recruited as needed to move the resistance; the heavier the weight, the more fibers get recruited. Each recruited fiber contracts 100%, and unrecruited fibers don't contract at all.

The fully contracted position of an exercise is where the muscle is under full tension. It can be thought of as the finish position, where the weight has been lifted as far as possible.

So what we want to do on every exercise in order to get stronger, bigger muscles is recruit as many muscle fibers as possible as fully as possible. This means moving the heaviest weight we can handle with good form (as described in Rule #1) to the fully contracted (or "finish") position of the exercise.

And once we reach that position, it makes sense to spend a little extra time there. You want to hold that position for 1 or 2 seconds and really "squeeze" the working muscles. If you've never done this before, after a couple reps you'll really feel it!

The exception to this rule is on exercises that allow a "lockout" in the finish position, where the alignment of your bones is supporting the weight. Pausing on these exercises will allow your muscles to rest and decrease the intensity of the muscular contraction. Examples include any pressing exercise – leg press, bench press, shoulder press, chest press, etc.

### **ON YOUR NEXT WORKOUT:**

- Determine a **comfortable** stretch position for every exercise. If it's difficult or painful to get into a machine or reach the stretch position during the exercise, you're going too far. Write the equipment setting in your training log (you are recording your workouts, right?) and go back to it every time you perform that exercise.
- Always work in a pain-free range of motion. This may change from time to time, so don't be afraid to change the way you've been doing an exercise if it starts to hurt.  
**Strength training is supposed to help you, not hurt you.**
- Once in the fully contracted finish position of the exercise, where the weight has been fully lifted, hold that position for 1 or 2 seconds. On pressing exercises, instead of pausing, just smoothly change direction and start lowering the weight right away.
- [Click HERE for the range of motion video](#)

### #3. The New Rule of Intensity: Failure is Success

Intensity is the one and only factor in a workout that stimulates an increase in muscular size and strength.

Intensity is defined as the percentage of momentary effort being exerted. If you continue performing reps until you literally cannot move the weight while maintaining good form, despite your greatest effort, that's 100% intensity. **Your goal on every set is to reach that point.**

For example, if you do a set of barbell curls for 10 reps with 65 pounds, and no matter how hard you try you can't do an 11<sup>th</sup> rep, we call that a set of 10 reps to failure. That's the way you want to perform every set, every exercise, every workout – as many reps as you can until you fail. (Except for warmups).

Once you complete a set, with good form, to real muscular failure, you will *know* that you've done everything you can do stimulate those muscles to get bigger and stronger. You will most likely feel a deep muscle stimulation like you've never felt before.

That last, almost impossible rep is the most productive rep of the set, in terms of increasing your muscular size and strength. If you stop short of that, you never do that most productive rep – no matter how many sets you do!

The last rep of a set to failure flips a switch that sets the adaptation process in motion, causing your muscles to get stronger and bigger – **so don't avoid it.** If you don't challenge your body, it won't change!

#### ON YOUR NEXT WORKOUT:

- On each set, keep performing reps with proper form (as described in New Rules #1 and #2) until you literally can't move the weight at all.
- If you complete a rep, no matter how hard it was, always try another one until you get stopped in your tracks, while maintaining good form.
- When you do get stopped, keep exerting force and trying to move the weight for a few seconds, then slowly return it to the starting position.

## #4. The New Rule of Exercise Selection: Building Plus Rebuilding

When it comes to choosing what exercises to include in your workout, think **safety first**.

In medical school, students are taught the ancient Greek phrase “primum non nocere”, which means “first do no harm”. You need to have this attitude when designing your own workouts.

Getting hurt in the gym is both counterproductive and demoralizing. And while there is always some risk, there are many things we can do to minimize the risk of injury, thereby paving the way to long-term uninterrupted progress.

In addition to safety, the exercises you choose to do have a lot to do with the strength and muscle building results you get. Not all exercises are created equal in this regard.

You want to pick exercises that focus on the working muscles, without relying on balance or athletic skill. Either of those requirements will compromise the intensity of the workout, and create a higher risk of injury – both bad.

So the ideal strength training exercise is one where all you have to concentrate on is pushing or pulling as hard as you can with the working muscles, without having to worry about losing your balance, having something fall on you, or getting stuck under a heavy weight. If your mind is distracted by those dangers, you won't be able to concentrate on reaching that point of 100% intensity – muscular failure – that we talked about earlier.

**Here are some criteria to guide your exercise selections:**

- Make sure you can exit the exercise safely at any time.
- On any exercise where you will be under the weight, make sure there is some barrier to catch the weight to prevent you from getting stuck under it. (Don't be the next guy in a YouTube video getting trapped under the weight while bench pressing).
- The more complex an exercise is to perform, the more dangerous and less intense it will be. For example, power cleans or Olympic lifts.

- If you have back problems, it's a good idea to always have your chest or back supported during an exercise. For example, seated dumbbell curls would be preferable to standing barbell curls.
- If you want your shoulders to stay healthy, don't put anything behind your neck. This includes barbell squats and behind the neck pulldowns or shoulder presses.

## Build AND Rebuild

In addition to the “big muscle” exercises we all do, it's important when you're over 50 to include what I call some “rebuilding” exercises in your routine - to address any previously injured areas, or body parts that are particularly susceptible to future injuries. You want to strengthen not only the showy muscles, but also the important deeper muscles that hold you together.

Common problem areas include the deep muscles of the shoulder, the lower back, the hands, the neck, and the knees. Taking the time to train these areas will pay huge dividends in keeping you at your highest possible level of pain-free function.



**Rotator Cuff Strengthening**



**Lumbar Spine Stabilization**

[Click HERE for videos of these rebuilding exercises](#)

#### **ON YOUR NEXT WORKOUT:**

- Pick exercises where all you have to worry about is pushing or pulling with your working muscles to a point of muscular failure, without having to worry about losing your balance.
- Make sure you can exit the exercise safely at any time, so you can go all out without worrying about anything falling on you or getting stuck under something.
- Add some “rebuilding” exercises to your workout to directly strengthen any problem areas you may have. These will vary for each individual, and many people neglect these important movements in favor of “big” exercises only.
- Any exercise that involves jumping, throwing, swinging, catching or balancing has no place in your routine. You won’t effectively overload the working muscles if you’re focused on these things, and the risk of injury is unacceptable and unnecessary.
- **Remember: if an exercise looks dangerous, it probably is!**

## #5. The New Rule of Recovery: Fill the Hole, Build the Hill

Recovery is just as important to your results as the workout. The workout must come first; it is the stimulus, the thing that flips the switch and sets muscular change into motion. Recovery time is when those changes take place.

Your body doesn't change during the workout; the workout merely stimulates the change. Then you need a recovery period to give your body time to produce those changes.

When you get done with a workout, you don't feel the same as you did before you started. You feel tired, maybe a little bit drained. Why? Because during the workout something was used up-the energy your body needed to complete the workout. In effect, by working out you have dug an energy hole.



The first thing that must happen after a workout is that hole must get filled in-you have to recover the energy that you used up during the workout.



Once that energy has been replaced, then and only then will your body pile some extra muscle on top of where that hole used to be.



### **How often?**

That's why lifting weights every day is a mistake, even if you are training different parts of your body. There is an overall energy drain on your body, and eventually you will get burned out.

You should give yourself at least 2 days between strength training workouts, and many people over 50 need up to 7 days.



## How long?

Another important consideration for optimal recovery is the duration of each workout. We talked about workout intensity before. Intensity is how hard the workout is, while duration is how long it takes.

You now know that intensity is the single specific stimulus required to generate increased muscular strength. The critical, yet often ignored, factor involved in strength training programs is that intensity and duration are inversely proportional. This means that as the intensity of effort *increases*, the amount of time that such an effort can be sustained will proportionately *decrease*.

What this means in practical terms is the harder you strength train, the less time you can (or should) strength train. **It is literally impossible for a human being to go all out for prolonged periods of time.**

Picture yourself sprinting at top speed for a distance for 50 yards. Now imagine yourself running one mile. Can you run the mile at the same all-out pace you used in sprinting the 50 yards? Of course not. Why not? Because intensity and duration are inversely proportional. Since you drastically increased the duration of your run, the intensity had to decrease, whether you wanted it to or not.

If you are putting in a maximum effort on each set of your workout, each workout should take 45 minutes or less. That's it.

Which is great news for us older folks. Who's got the time, or the desire, at this point in our lives to spend all day in the gym?

Let's face it, most of us have more time behind us than ahead of us. Let's not spend one minute more than necessary working out! Resolve to give your workout everything you've got for the short time you are in the gym, then get out and give your body a chance to change itself.

## ON YOUR NEXT WORKOUT:

- To be effective, strength training needs to be not only **intense**, but also **brief** and **infrequent**. Don't try to figure out how much exercise you can tolerate; instead, ask yourself "how little exercise do I require?"
- Don't strength train every day. The changes we seek from strength training take place in between workouts, not during them. Most people over 50 need 2 to 7 days between intense strength training workouts to get the best results, which means working out once or twice a week.
- Each workout should be under 45 minutes. If it's longer than that, you'll end up pacing yourself for the last few exercises, instead of going all out on everything. **Make the workout a series of maximum efforts, not an endurance contest.** That's the best way to get stronger.
- Recovery doesn't mean doing nothing on your rest days, it just means don't do high intensity strength training. Engaging in physical activities that are fun for you and low to moderate in intensity is important for overall good health.
- **Anything you can do to make your current workouts harder and shorter is a step in the right direction.**

## Conclusion

The aging process takes a toll on us physically. As we get over 50, we begin to naturally lose muscle and strength every year. Increased aches and pains, sometimes requiring medical attention, remind us of some of the crazy stuff we did as kids.

And the combination of these problems can ruin what should be the greatest times of our lives.

The kids are grown, and your career is winding down. It's your time now – but are you physically ready to fully enjoy life?

Now you can be. Implementing these 5 New Rules of Strength Training will immediately make your workouts safer, more time efficient, and more productive.

### Let's review

Here are your new rules, to start implementing on your very next workout:

**#1. The New Rule of Range of Motion:** Limit the Stretch, Focus on Contraction.

**#2. The New Rule of Rep Speed:** Lift Slow, Lower Even Slower.

**#3. The New Rule of Intensity:** Failure is Success.

**#4. The New Rule of Recovery:** Fill the Hole, Build the Hill.

**#5. The New Rule of Exercise Selection:** Building Plus Rebuilding.

By following these rules, you'll be able to build and keep strength and muscle for years to come, in the most time-efficient way, while compensating for age-related limitations and injuries.

**I want to thank you for downloading this report, and admire you for wanting to stay strong and live a full life.** My goal is to help those over 50 like you and I do exactly that. Remember, I'm not just your Coach, I'm on this journey with you.

I'm adding new content to [StrengthAfter50.com](https://StrengthAfter50.com) all the time – please check back any time you need more practical advice on strength training designed specifically for you.

**“Life is for those who truly live it; and time alone does not make a full life.”**  
**Anonymous**

Stay strong,



**Looking for a strength training program designed for people over 50 you can sustain for many years without getting hurt or wasting time?**

**[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about the available  
[Strength After 50 Workout Programs](#)**

**I have 2 Workout Programs available, one for those who work out at a gym, and one for those who work out at home.**



The Stay Strong Forever Gym Training Program is a complete, proven system that will help you navigate the gym successfully to get and stay strong in the safest, most time-efficient manner possible. The program will work in any gym and is sustainable for life.

**[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about the [Stay Strong Forever Program](#)**



The Strength After 50 Home Gym Workout Program is a step-by-step, A-Z system to help you achieve a total transformation in your physical health and strength, without the risk of injury, all from the convenience of your own home.

**[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about the [Home Workout Program](#)**

Each Program is a digital strength training video course that will help you get and stay strong safely without spending endless hours in the gym every week. You can access all of the course materials from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

Once you learn this program, you'll never need another one; the program is designed to be sustainable for life with only simple minor adjustments.

I'll be your coach throughout the program, explaining and demonstrating everything in great detail to give you all the tools you need to be successful, based on my 40+ years of experience as a personal trainer, licensed physical therapist assistant, and collegiate and NFL strength coach.

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about the [Strength After 50 Programs](#)

