



5 common myths about strength training after 50

Common Myth #1: After 50 you can't go heavy anymore, it's too dangerous

Even though most people understand that strength training workouts need to be intense to build strength, some are reluctant to use heavy weights because they're afraid they will get injured.

But getting injured when training with heavy weights is almost always the result of poor form. If you lift the weight in a slow, controlled fashion (2 seconds) and lower slowly under control (4 seconds), training will be very safe.

You can and should use heavy weights in your strength training if your goal is to build strength and muscle. Just make sure you are using great form at all times, and your risk of injury will be very small.

Common Myth #2: More is Better

This Myth is characterized by statements like:

"45 minutes once or twice a week can't possibly be enough"
"If 2x/week is good, 4x/week will be twice as good."

But here's the thing - 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 has to happen after a workout is that hole has to get filled in-you have to recover the energy that you used up. 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.



And that process doesn't take 5 minutes, especially when you're over 50 - it takes at least a couple days.

That's why working out too often is a mistake, even if you're training different muscle groups. There is an overall energy drain on your body, and eventually you will get burned out.

It seems like many of us have been asking ourselves the wrong question when setting up a workout plan. Instead of trying to figure out: "how much exercise can I tolerate?" We should be asking: "how little exercise do I require?" And after decades of research and experience, I know the answer is one or two brief (but intense) workouts per week.

Common Myth #3: All you should be doing at your age is bodyweight exercises and/or light weights.

Some trainers tell older people like us that's all we should be doing because they're afraid we'll get hurt doing anything too intense, and then they'll be in trouble.

So they steer us toward things like group chair exercise classes, or workouts with very light weights.

But light weights don't build muscle. As we went over in our first video, you have to work at or near the limit of your existing capacity to stimulate your body to change.

In other words, these programs aren't Effective, if your goal is to stay strong and not lose muscle over the years.

Common Myth #4: Pain is inevitable

There's a popular saying you've probably heard that fuels this myth --

No pain, no gain

To me the saying should be:



No strain, no gain

A lot of people think they have to accept that they will be in pain if they work out hard with weights after 50.

Remember - *strength training should help you, not hurt you.*

But we have to differentiate between muscular discomfort and pain.

Muscular discomfort is the burning sensation you feel in your muscles that lets you know they're working. It's unpleasant, but not sharp.

Pain is sharp and may be felt in your joints, your spine, or a different body part than the working muscles.

Pain can be avoided by proper form and smart exercise selection.

A couple Key points for proper form:

- Work in a pain-free ROM, no overstretching
- Slow controlled reps (we've already covered)

And a couple Key points for smart exercise selection:

- No balancing required
- Nothing will fall on you
- Can exit the exercise at any time

Common Myth #5: You can't build muscle after 50

This is probably the #1 question I get, so a couple years ago I decided to conduct an experiment and document the results to prove that theory wrong.

I started this experiment on May 11th, 2022 - I was 62 at the time.

The first thing I did was measure my body composition using an InBody 570 body scanning device. It showed I weighed 171.7 pounds, of which



76.9 pounds was muscle and 34.8 pounds was body fat, and my visceral fat level (the fat stored around your organs in your abdomen) was level 7.

For the 4 weeks from May 16th to June 11th, I performed one strength training workout per week for 30 minutes, performing 1 set of 8 exercises. I also tracked my calories every day and tried to keep my total calorie intake at around 2200 a day, while striving to get 125 grams of protein every day as well.

On June 14th, I did my post-Challenge InBody scan, and I was pretty happy with the results. It showed I gained 2.2 pounds of muscle mass, lost 3.6 pounds of body fat, and dropped 1 level of visceral fat from 7 to 6.

And my results were not shocking to me - I've personally worked with tons of people over 50 who gained muscle in a relatively short period of time. So you absolutely CAN build muscle after 50, male or female, PROVIDED you follow the principles of proper strength training.

So in Summary, the truth about these 5 myths is:

- 1. You can and should train heavy, provided you use proper form.**
- 2. More is not better with strength training, your workouts must be brief and infrequent, but intense.**
- 3. You need progressive overload to build muscle, bodyweight alone or light weights won't get the job done.**
- 4. You will experience muscular discomfort if you're working out hard enough, but you should never be in pain.**
- 5. People over 50 absolutely can and do build muscle, and if they can do it, so can you, if you strength train correctly.**