ACSM’s Strategic Health Initiative (SHI) on Aging Presents:

Five Easy Steps to Beginning Strength Exercises

Give it a chance — you’ll never be sorry!

See the other ACSM’s Active Aging Tips including “Exercising Safely”
Get the NIA Guide on Exercise free:
call 1-800-222-2225 or
www.nih.gov/nia

AMERICAN COLLEGE
OF SPORTS MEDICINE.
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Five Easy Steps to Beginning Strength Exercises

1) Make a Commitment
   • exercise will take some time and effort
   • expect to strength train 20-45 minutes two or three times each week
   • you may be a little sore for the first week, but it will pass.
   • join a club, work with a trainer or buy home equipment
   • expect costs, but they can be minimized

2) Get a Good Resource
   • this can be a personal trainer but it can also be a good book*
   • NIA Exercise Guide (see below) has good exercise program tips
   • learn eight to ten exercises to strengthen all major muscle groups

3) The Routine
   • eight -15 repetitions (one complete “lift and relax” cycle) for each set and two or three sets of each exercise
   • if you cannot do at least eight repetitions the weight is too heavy
   • breathe once for each repetition; always move the weight slowly
   • rest two minutes between sets or do an exercise with a different muscle group
   • your whole workout should take less than 45 minutes

4) Progression
   • if you exceed 15 repetitions the weight is too light; gradually increase
   • gallon milk containers make good weights; just fill to increase weight
   • dumbbells and cuff weights are right for some people
   • at first, you will be increasing the weight every week or so

5) Rest and Get Strong
   • do not do strengthening exercise routines on two consecutive days
   • rest to give your muscles a chance to recuperate
   • you will become much stronger — probably 25-100 percent stronger in each muscle
   • research shows the biggest improvements are in the first FEW months