

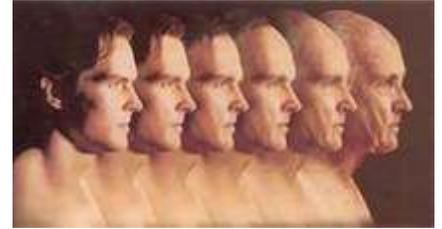
## CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 2

- ROUTINE HEALTH MAINTENANCE
- DIET AND FITNESS

### Routine Health Maintenance for Men

Some say men take better care of their cars than they do themselves. But at least a car comes with an owner's manual telling you when scheduled service is due.

Few health maintenance issues are as predictable as tire rotations and oil changes. But attention to just a few basic health issues can go a long way. Since you can't trade yourself in, it's well worth it to do research on checkup tips for men.



### **1. Know Your Cholesterol Levels**

The No. 1 killer of men today is cardiovascular disease, mostly heart attacks and strokes. Although the last few decades have seen the rate of death from cardiovascular disease fall, it's still men's top health threat. And high cholesterol is a major preventable risk factor.

The American Heart Association recommends you get your cholesterol checked beginning at age 20, then every five years. Everyone with high cholesterol needs treatment, although for many that will mean diet and exercise.

### **2. Check Your Blood Pressure**

Don't expect to feel symptoms of high blood pressure. Until hypertension's daily pounding of your arteries has damaged your body, you won't notice a thing. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80, and medicines are prescribed for pressures more than 139/89.

Why care? High blood pressure causes or makes worse a long list of health problems: heart attacks, strokes, erectile dysfunction, and kidney disease, to name a few. Most cases can be prevented, and controlling your blood pressure is an easy place to start.

First, though, you've got to know your numbers. Call your primary care doctor, or just walk in to your neighborhood fire station -- no appointment necessary.

Once you have your numbers you can choose whether to take medicine or use medicinal herbs. Ultimately it's your choice.

### **3. Refresh Your Refrigerator**

It's no coincidence that both the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society continually advise, "eat your vegetables (and fruits, too)."

Cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, eye disease, diabetes, and other health conditions all involve damage to cells. It's thought that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables -- the best source of antioxidants -- may prevent some cases of these illnesses.

Also, the more plant-based foods you're eating, the less saturated fat and total calories you'll be taking in. Over time, less fat means a healthier weight, improved cholesterol, and better health.

Current guidelines recommend far more daily fruits and vegetables than most Americans eat. Ideally, you should eat mostly plant-based food for most meals, and enjoy meat as a small side dish.

#### **4. Step on the Scale**

Three out of four of Americans are overweight or obese. Is fat the new normal? There's an ongoing debate as to just how bad being overweight or obese is for our health. But it's clear that obesity is linked to higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and many kinds of cancer.

While the experts debate, start losing weight. "Move more, eat less" is your mantra. You don't need a gym membership to reach your goal of 30 minutes of daily physical activity. Park the car far from the store, take the stairs at work, and walk the dog around the block, and you're almost there.

Almost any diet can work in the short run, but long-term weight loss requires a permanent lifestyle change for most people. Make small changes that you can sustain over time and build on your successes.

#### **5. Get Screened for Colorectal Cancer**

Unlike many other forms of cancer, colorectal cancer typically grows for years before spreading. If caught early, it can be cured.

A colonoscopy is a somewhat awkward, slightly embarrassing, and highly effective method of finding colon cancer. Often, polyps that may turn into cancer can be removed during the colonoscopy. Other methods of screening that don't require colonoscopy are also available. Screening begins at age 50, sometimes earlier if you have a family member who had colon cancer.

Unfortunately, 50% to 75% of people don't take advantage of their advantage over colorectal cancer. The National Cancer Institute estimates that in 2012, about 52,000 deaths will occur from colorectal cancer. Don't be a statistic.

#### **6. Learn About Prostate Cancer Screening**

Prostate cancer screening is controversial. Using the notorious gloved finger (digital rectal exam), a blood test (prostate specific antigen or PSA) and biopsies if necessary, doctors can detect abnormal growths in the prostate gland early in many men. Sometimes, screening catches prostate cancers, saving men's lives.

But surprisingly, screening hasn't been proven overall to help men survive prostate cancer. That's because screening detects many cancers that, if left alone, would never cause problems. These cancers are nevertheless removed surgically -- leaving some men who might never have died from prostate cancer with side effects such as impotence or incontinence.

The American Cancer Society says men should talk to their doctors about the benefits, risks, and limitations of prostate cancer screening before deciding whether to be tested. The group's guidelines make it clear that prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood testing should not occur unless this discussion happens.

For most men at average risk, screening is started at age 50. However, some doctors recommend that men at higher risk of prostate cancer -- African-American men or men with a family history of prostate cancer -- start screening earlier.

The American Urological Association recommends a first-time test at age 40, with the schedule of follow-up testing to be determined on an individual basis.

If prostate cancer screening is done, it involves a blood test and possibly a prostate exam by your doctor. Whether or not you test is something you and your doctor must decide together.

## **7. Get to Know Your Doctor**

Men are less likely to go to the doctor than women. Men's health conditions are often more serious when they do finally seek help. Men lead women in 14 of the top 15 causes of death in the U.S. See a pattern developing here?

Experts disagree as to whether healthy men need yearly checkups. But if you have a health condition, you should be in your doctor's office often enough to notice the magazines change.

Visiting the doctor may sometimes feel like an unproductive, stressful hassle. But routine doctor appointments may also save your life down the road. Is your health worth it?

## **Diet and Fitness**

Most people with access to modern news and information realize that exercise and diet are important to lifelong health. However, not many people really understand why. Understanding how exercise and diet affect your health can help you set up your own program of fitness and nutrition that best addresses your needs.

## **Cardiovascular Exercise**

Cardiovascular exercise increases your heart rate over an extended period, strengthening your heart and other parts of your circulatory system. Cardiovascular exercise has been linked with a reduced chance of heart disease, increased oxygen flow to the brain and healthy body weight. Examples of cardiovascular exercise include running, cycling and swimming. A disadvantage of cardiovascular exercise is that it can be time-consuming, as compared to some strength-building workouts. Health writer Dr. Mehmet Oz also notes that excessive cardio workouts can be hard on the knees and hips, leading to a reduced quality of later life.

## **Resistance Exercise**

Resistance exercise builds strength and muscle mass by putting muscles through their regular range of motion under more weight than they are accustomed to. Advantages of improved muscle strength include protection from injury, increased metabolism and --- in many cultures - improved physical attractiveness. Although this last may not seem like a health benefit, a good personal body image has been shown to reduce incidence of eating disorders, depression and anxiety. Some resistance exercise plans do carry an elevated risk of injury due to the weights being lifted.

## **Diet and Nutrition**

You eat to provide your body with the raw energy and materials it needs to live and function. Performance athletes eat a diet specially formulated by professional nutritionists.

## **Diet and Weight**

Research reported by Willett demonstrates a nearly one-to-one correlation between bodyweight and lifespan. As people approach healthy body weight, their risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some types of cancer correspondingly go down. Eating the right number of calories for your lifestyle can help you stay at a healthy body weight.

The USDA recommends a baseline diet of 2,000 calories based on an adult with a sedentary job who gets two to three sessions of vigorous activity each week. More active people will need more, and less active people should eat fewer calories.

## **Food for Men: 10 Foods to Boost Male Health**

Men are different from women in all kinds of ways -- including their nutritional needs. Just as women need particular nutrients during pregnancy or for protection from breast cancer, men need nutrients that can help them maintain muscle mass, prevent prostate cancer, and more.

Many foods that tend to be favorites among men are not the best choices for good health. Yet a healthy diet and regular physical activity can help prevent heart disease and cancer, the No. 1 and No. 2 killers for men over 35. They can also enhance performance, from the board room to the bedroom.

### **Food for Men No. 1: Oysters**



Could there be something to the legend that oysters are the food of love? Well, it's true that just a few oysters each day will deliver a full day's supply of the antioxidant mineral zinc. Zinc is involved in hundreds of body processes, from producing DNA to repairing cells.

Research shows that adequate zinc may protect against cellular damage that leads to prostate cancer. Sexual functioning of the male reproductive system, including increased sperm counts, is also enhanced with zinc.

Take caution when considering eating uncooked oysters. An infection called *Vibrio Vulnificus* is associated with the consumption of raw oysters. People with liver disease, heavy alcohol use, and chronic illnesses such as diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis, and chronic renal failure are at increased risk.

You can also get your daily recommended dose of 11 milligrams a day by eating other shellfish, lean beef, lean pork, or legumes.

### **Food for Men No. 2: Bananas**

Bananas are a great portable source of quick energy and are rich in potassium, which is needed to regulate nerves, heartbeat and, especially, blood pressure. Diets rich in potassium and magnesium (which is also found in bananas) can reduce the risk of stroke.



As a super source of vitamin B-6, bananas can also aid your immune system, help form red blood cells, ensure a well-functioning nervous system, and assist protein metabolism. So enjoy a banana each day, at breakfast on your whole grain-cereal or before your workout at the gym.

Not a banana fan? Orange juice, milk, tomato products, and beans are other good sources of dietary potassium.

### **Food for Men No. 3: Fatty Fish**

No list of super foods would be complete without the healthy fat, omega-3 fatty acids. These polyunsaturated fats are the preferred form of fats in your diet for many reasons. They can benefit the heart, circulation, and immune system and reduce the risk for prostate cancer, among other things.



Omega-3 fatty acids are potent anti-inflammatory foods that can help lower triglyceride [blood fat] levels, reduce aches and pains in athletes, and offer relief with certain kinds of arthritis.

Fatty fish (salmon, sardines, tuna, mackerel, and herring) are the richest sources of omega-3 fatty acids. In fact, the American Heart Association recommends that everyone eat fish twice weekly.

You can also get omega-3s in plant-based foods, like flaxseed, walnuts, soy, canola oil, and fortified products such as eggs. But there are other good reasons to eat fish.

Fatty fish are also a good source of vitamin D, a nutrient that tends to be deficient in our diets and [which] in adequate supply can help prevent cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and bone disease.

### **Food for Men No. 4: Broccoli**

While virtually all vegetables deserve a place on the super foods list, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli are helpful in the prevention of heart disease and cancer. It's loaded with vitamin C, beta-carotene, potassium, and a phytochemical called sulforaphane, which may have anticancer (prostate and colon) properties.



A recent Harvard study found that participants who had five servings a week of cruciferous vegetables were half as likely as others to develop bladder cancer, a cancer that affects two to three times as many men as women. This super-nutritious green vegetable may also help lower levels of homocysteine, an amino acid associated with increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Don't care for broccoli? Go for other cruciferous choices like cabbage, bok choy, shredded broccoli slaw, cabbage, cauliflower, or Brussels sprouts.

And did you ever wonder where the term "cruciferous" originates? It is not because they are crunchy vegetables, but when the buds from this group of vegetables sprouts, their leaves form a cross like a crucifix.

## Food for Men No. 5: Brazil Nuts

These large nuts from Brazil are packed with magnesium and selenium; powerful antioxidants that may help prevent heart disease and cancer and protect prostate health. The studies showing reduction in cancer have been primarily in people whose diets were deficient in selenium, not in those who were already getting enough.



Selenium also helps lower LDL or "bad" cholesterol and reduces the incidence of blood clots and heart disease.

Adults should get 55 micrograms of selenium daily from Brazil nuts, dry-roasted nuts, turkey, tuna, or shellfish. Indeed, you can get your daily dose of selenium in just one Brazil nut.

## Food for Men No. 6: Whole Grains

Most men get enough carbs in their diets, but they tend to be the wrong kind. A diet rich in whole grains provides fiber, vitamins, and minerals – all the co-factors for heart health, building muscles, and keeping waistlines small.

Try whole grain pasta or quinoa, a trendy, not-so-whole-grain-tasting grain that's rich in lutein for prostate health.



Oatmeal and barley are rich in soluble fiber, full of B vitamins that can help lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and are also good for the prostate. 10-25 grams of soluble fiber a day from oatmeal or other sources of soluble fiber such as apples, pears, and beans are recommended.

When buying grain products, look for those whose labels say they have at least 3-5 grams of fiber per serving.

To avoid digestive problems, increase your fiber intake gradually, and don't forget to drink plenty of water.

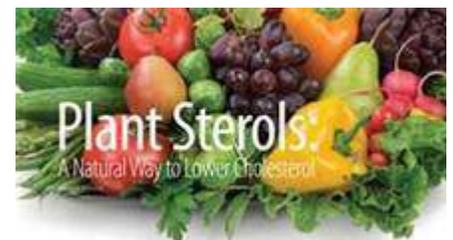
## Food for Men No. 7: Plant Sterols

Sterols are naturally occurring substances in fruits and vegetables that have been shown to lower mildly elevated blood cholesterol levels. Manufacturers are now adding concentrated versions of them to products like margarine, yogurt, orange juice, and granola bars.

Plant Sterol/Stanol Esters	
■ If 2 g of plant sterol or stanol is added to average daily portion of margarine, it has variable effect on LDL-C by age group:	
■ Age	LDL-C reduced by:
50-59	21 mg/dl or 0.54 mmol/l
40-49	17 mg/dl or 0.43 mmol/l
30-39	13 mg/dl or 0.33 mmol/l

Men should regularly include a total of 2 grams of plant sterols, taken in two doses with meals, to help inhibit absorption of cholesterol in the intestine.

Plant sterols are added to a variety of products including orange juice, margarine, dark chocolate, granola bars, cheese, bread, soy products, and more. Plant sterols can safely be used with cholesterol-lowering medication.



## Food for Men No 8: Soybeans

Soy is rich in isoflavones, which protect prostate health and have been shown to lower prostate cancer risk. The latest research continues to strengthen the fact that isoflavones found in soy foods are beneficial for both the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer in men.



And according to one study, eating 25 grams or about 1 ounce of soy protein a day can help decrease cholesterol.

The FDA has approved a health claim for food labels that say having 25 grams of soy protein per day, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, can help reduce the risk of heart disease.

Try to eat a few servings a day of soy products, such as soy nuts, soy milk, soy cheese, veggie burgers, tofu, or edamame.

## Food for Men No 9: Berries or Cherries

The violet, blue, and red colors in all kinds of berries and cherries are responsible for the healthy properties of these fruits. These little jewels are chock-full of the health-protecting flavonoid, anthocyanin.



Berries contain over 4,000 different compounds that have antioxidant properties beyond vitamin C, so make sure you include these delicious and low-calorie fruits to help meet your 5+ servings of fruits each day.

Adding berries to the diet may even help slow the decline in brain function that can occur with aging.

Large studies show the more produce you eat the better, but specifically berries (blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, and cherries) can enhance brain function and keep your brain healthy.

## Food for Men No 10: Red-Orange Vegetables

Vitamin C and beta-carotene are antioxidants that help preserve healthy skin cells and prevent oxidation from the sun.

Vitamin C is involved in collagen production. Beta-carotene converts to the active form of vitamin A, which helps to repair epithelial or skin cells.



Get these nutrients from red bell peppers (just one has 300% of the recommended daily value for vitamin C), carrots, pumpkin, or sweet potatoes.

But for that matter, just about any vegetable should be on the list of top foods for men (and women). Dark, leafy greens and any nutrient-rich vegetable can help reduce the risk of enlarged prostates, according to a recent study in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Men whose diets are high in nutrients found in vegetables -- like vitamin C, beta-carotene, and potassium -- were found to be less likely to develop benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or enlarged prostate.

## **Belly Fattening Foods Men Can't Resist**

### **Belly Fattener: Doughnuts**

You're pumping gas before work when you feel the siren call from the mini-mart -- a dozen glazed doughnuts waiting just for you. If you give in often enough, these round treats will round out your belly. One glazed doughnut has 260 calories. Foods like this can fit into a healthy diet if eaten in moderation. But if you eat the whole box, that's 3,120 calories. A 200-pound man would have to run about 25 miles to work that off.



### **Belly Fattener: Ice Cream**

With a little protein and calcium, it's not a bad choice. But a typical half-cup serving of premium vanilla can have 230 calories.

**Better Bet:** Look for the slow-churned variety -- it's lower in fat and many flavors have only 100 calories per half cup.



### **Belly Fattener: Chips**

A serving of 15 chips has 160 calories, and it's easy to mindlessly chomp your way through a big bag. Two tablespoons of French onion dip will add another 60 calories and 5 grams of fat.

**Better Bet:** Fat-free popcorn. Six cups has just 100 calories.



### **Belly Fattener: Bacontini**

It's as fatty as it is trendy. This manly cocktail consists of scotch or vodka infused with bacon fat, sometimes served with a strip of caramelized bacon. At around 284 calories a pop, the Bacontini is worse than a doughnut.

**Better Bet:** Classic martini. The alcohol is still fattening, but your arteries might just prefer the olive to the strip of bacon.



### **Belly Fattener: Beer**

The average 12-ounce can of beer contains about 150 calories. Have a couple every night, and it won't take long to sprout the infamous beer belly. If your waist size expands to more than 40 inches, you'll have a greater risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and some types of cancer.

**Better Bet:** Light beer averages about 100 calories a can.



### **Belly Fattener: Hot Dogs**

There are few pastimes more all-American than cheering for your favorite baseball team while noshing on a hot dog. If you start adding extras, this snack becomes as fattening as a full-blown meal. One cheese dog has 390 calories and 8 grams of saturated fat.

**Better Bet:** Peanuts. This classic ballgame snack is high in protein, fiber, and good fats.



### **Belly Fattener: Fatty Red Meat**

If you're the meat and potatoes type, few meals are more tempting than a big, juicy steak that covers your whole plate. But a 16-ounce prime rib can have more than 1,000 calories and 37 grams of saturated fat. Add sides and an appetizer, and dinner at your favorite steakhouse can add up to more than a day's worth of calories and artery-clogging saturated fat.

**Better Bet:** A fist-sized portion of lean meat, such as sirloin, tenderloin, or flank steak.



### **Belly Fattener: Pepperoni Pizza**

Whether it's at poker night or a school fundraiser, you probably wolf down a few slices of pizza every week. If you're partial to toppings like pepperoni, sausage, ham, and beef, you could take in more than 300 calories per slice.

**Better Bet:** Top pizza with veggies to get extra fiber and nutrients. You'll shave up to 100 calories per slice.



### **Belly Fattener: Giant Burgers**

Fast-food chains seem to be trying to one-up each other with gargantuan burgers. Wendy's latest is the Baconator Double with 930 calories and 58 grams of fat. McDonald's Angus Bacon & Cheese packs 790 calories and 39 grams of fat, and Burger King's Triple Whopper has a whopping 1,140 calories and 75 grams of fat.

**Better Bet:** A single grilled burger made with lean ground beef.



### **Belly Fattener: Super-Size Fries**

Want some fries with that? Most of us do, but you might be surprised to learn that a large order of fries can have as many calories as a typical burger. And unfortunately, fried potatoes offer few nutritional benefits compared to other vegetables.

**Better Bet:** Side salad or fruit cup.



### **Belly Fattener: Caffeinated Soda**

There's no denying it -- soda that is spiked with caffeine is great for a pick-me-up before a dull meeting or boring lecture. But toss a few of these back each day and the calories add up fast. One 20-ounce bottle packs 250 calories, along with the caffeine, similar to other full-sugar sodas.

**Better Bet:** Peppermint Tea. A 20-ounce cup has virtually no calories. If you like it with milk, use the nonfat kind to stay under 100 calories.



### **Belly Fattener: BBQ Pork Sandwich**

Tailgate party essentials include beer, chips, and BBQ pork sandwiches on fluffy white rolls. The shredded pork may hit the spot before you settle in for the game, but each sandwich can have nearly 610 calories.

**Better Bet:** Lean grilled chicken or burgers on whole wheat buns, baked beans, and coleslaw.



### **Belly Fattener: Buffalo Wings**

A typical order of chicken wings has about 700 calories. If you have a taste for boneless buffalo-style, you can make that a whopping 1,160 calories, not including decadent dips. Blue cheese dipping sauce will add another 240 calories and 26 grams of fat to your meal. It's easy to see why wings are best enjoyed only occasionally.

**Better Bet:** Grilled chicken strips.



### **Belly Fattener: Rack of Ribs**

Gnawing rib meat off the bone may be satisfying, but a whole rack of ribs has 1,000 calories and a day's worth of fat. The sauce is usually loaded with additional calories, sugar, and sodium.

**Better Bet:** Splurge with half a rack of ribs and a baked sweet potato with a squeeze of lime juice or sprinkle of cinnamon for less fat, calories, and a good dose of vitamins and minerals.



### **Belly Fattener: Cherry Danish**

A cherry Danish might seem like a quick and nutritious breakfast, but don't let the fruit content fool you. A typical fruit pastry is not a healthy snack. One Danish contains about 440 calories and may pack some trans fats to boot. Trans fats greatly increase your risk of developing high cholesterol and heart disease.

**Better Bet:** Fresh whole fruit and low-fat yogurt.



### **Belly Fattener: Mega Frozen Dinners**

When you get home from a long day at work, you might want nothing more than to plop in front of your TV with a quick and easy frozen dinner. But some brands -- including those marketed to hungry men -- can be very high in calories, sodium, and trans fats.

**Better Bet:** Read nutrition labels for lean frozen dinners made with whole grains.



### **Belly Fattener: All-You-Can-Eat Buffet**

It's tempting to try and get your money's worth when you hit the buffet, but the calories add up quickly. If you can't resist piling your plate high, try to make nutritious choices. Take up space with steamed vegetables and salad, and go light on the fatty dressings and sauces.

**Better Bet:** Steer clear of buffets if you have trouble setting limits.



### **Lose the Gut: Yogurt**

Not everything you eat will pad your belly. In a recent study, yogurt (along with vegetables, whole grains, fruits and nuts) was identified as one of the foods that do not contribute to weight gain. Another study showed that adding yogurt decreased total body fat and belly fat. As a bonus, eating low or nonfat yogurt will boost calcium and vitamin D, nutrients typically lacking in adult diets.



## Lose the Gut: Blueberries

Another tasty food that may help reduce belly fat is the blueberry. In a recent study, rats that ate blueberry-rich diets lost abdominal fat and improved their cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Even rats on high-fat diets experienced the benefits. Researchers believe blueberries may affect how the body stores sugar. Eating more of any fruit can help you lose weight.



## Lose the Gut: Fiber Foods

Eating more high-fiber foods may be a magic bullet of sorts against belly fat. A recent study found that people who ate more soluble fiber gained significantly less visceral (belly) fat than others over five years -- regardless of changes in their body weight overall.

**Tip:** 10 grams of soluble fiber did the trick: the amount in two small apples, a cup of green peas, and 1/2 cup of pinto beans.



## Lose the Gut: Exercise

Regular exercise can help you lose weight and keep a spare tire at bay. For a firm gut, you'll need strength training and weight loss to let those firm abs shine *and* steer clear of the doughnuts. If you're already overweight or obese, shedding just 10% of your weight will lower your risk for diseases related to obesity.



## 7 Muscle Foods for Men

Want to look buff in your swimsuit this summer? Building abs and sculpting muscles starts in the kitchen before you ever hit the gym. Achieving muscle growth is a formula based on adequate calories, fluids, protein, and muscle-fatiguing strength training.

Drinking plenty of fluids, eating the right energy-rich foods along with weight lifting -- all timed to fuel workouts and repair muscle tissue -- will help you sculpt your muscles.

## Nutrition Game Plan

A balanced dietary intake is a good foundation for meal planning. In general, eating a well-balanced diet with enough calories to support exercise is the prescription, according to the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) position paper on nutrition and athletic performance.

The ADA and ACSM recommend getting enough calories including adequate fat and protein, with an emphasis on five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables, plenty of whole grains, cereals, beans, legumes, and enough fluid for optimal hydration.

## Muscle and Food

Fueling your workouts takes a combination of healthy carbs and protein. Protein is important to build and repair muscles. Carbs provide the energy to fuel fitness. You can't eat protein and expect it to turn to muscle. Pull protein into muscles with exercise.

The following are the recommended muscle-friendly foods:

1. **Fruit and vegetables** - are the foundation of all healthy diets, providing fiber, vitamins, minerals, and fluids. Vegetables contain small amounts of protein.
2. **Low-fat dairy** - provides high-quality protein, carbs, and essential vitamins such as vitamin D, potassium, and calcium. Chocolate milk is a good workout recovery beverage. If you are lactose intolerant, you may tolerate yogurt with active cultures.
3. **Lean meat** - This is a great source of protein, iron for oxygen transport to muscles, and amino acids including leucine, which is thought to be a trigger for muscle growth.
4. **Dark-meat chicken** - Boneless skinless chicken is good, but go dark and increase iron by 25% and three times the zinc for a healthy immune system.
5. **Eggs** - An egg a day is OK but don't throw out the yolk. Eggs contain all of the essential amino acids and half the protein is in the yolk with other important nutrients like lutein for eye health.
6. **Nuts** - Unsalted raw or roasted are a good source of protein that also contain vitamins, antioxidants, fiber, and healthy fats.
7. **Beans and whole grains** - These quality carbs contain small amounts of protein for energy and muscle repair, along with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants.

## Foods to Boost Male Health

### **Chocolate**

Chocolate may improve blood flow - if you eat the right kind. Studies suggest the flavonoids in *dark* chocolate may curb levels of bad cholesterol, improve circulation, and keep blood pressure in check. Men with poor blood flow are more likely to develop erectile dysfunction, so heart-wise foods may protect your sex life, too. But too much chocolate can lead to weight gain. It's suggested to eat one ounce a day in lieu of other sweets.



### **Avocado**

Sure, avocado is high in fat - but it's the "good" kind. The monounsaturated fat found in avocados packs a one-two punch against cholesterol when it replaces saturated or *trans* fats in your diet. It can knock down levels of total cholesterol and "bad" cholesterol (LDL), as long as no more than 25%-35% of your daily calories come from all types of fat. Olive oil and nuts also contain good fats.



### **Ginger**

Like cherries, ginger may have anti-inflammatory properties that come in handy when you push yourself too hard. Research suggests eating ginger regularly may help reduce the pain of exercise-related muscle injuries.



## Milk and Yogurt

The whey in milk and yogurt is another source of leucine, the muscle-building amino acid. Greek yogurt is recommended. It has a thicker consistency that men may like better. It's also packed with protein, potassium, and friendly bacteria that keep the gut healthy. Plus, it requires no preparation whatsoever.



## Pistachios

Nuts provide protein, fiber, and zinc while satisfying the urge for a crunchy, salty snack. Pistachios stand out because they're higher in plant sterols that can improve cholesterol levels. Eating them from the shell, so you work harder for each one is recommended. That will help control how many you eat -- otherwise, the calories add up quickly.



## Tomato Sauce

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, a potent antioxidant that may protect against some cancers. Some research suggests that men who eat tomato sauce regularly are less likely to get prostate cancer, but not all studies support this. Tomatoes are worth your time anyway, because they provide a variety of plant nutrients. Adding salsa to a burrito or tomato sauce to pasta is an easy way to make a meal more nutritious.



## Mixed Vegetables

Vegetables are packed with phytochemicals, plant-based nutrients that boost cell health and protect against cancer. There are many different types of phytochemicals, and the best way to get a variety of them is to eat different colored veggies. There should be color on your plate at every meal.



## Leafy Green Vegetables

Spinach, collard greens, and kale can benefit the eyes as well as the prostate. These leafy green vegetables are rich in lutein and zeaxanthin. Both nutrients protect against cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, a chronic eye disease that impairs vision.



## Baked Potato

Baked potatoes are hearty and easy to make. They're also surprisingly high in vitamin C, an antioxidant that works against free radicals in the body. These normal byproducts of our metabolism become damaging at high levels and are linked to the development of cancer, heart disease, even arthritis. Go easy on the butter, or top with salsa and reduced-fat cheese. Other sources of vitamin C include green peppers, kiwi, and citrus fruits.



## Eggs

Eggs provide lutein, protein, and iron -- but you have to eat the whole egg. Even though the yolk is a source of cholesterol, it has half the protein and most of the flavor. Cut back on high-cholesterol sweets to make room for whole eggs in your diet. If you have high cholesterol, ask your doctor if you should limit how many eggs you eat per week.



## High-Fiber Cereal

Fiber may not sound manly, but it's a performance enhancer. Whether you're an executive or an athlete, you can't concentrate on your goals if your gut is acting up. Fiber helps keep your digestive system running smoothly and it benefits the heart, too. This doesn't mean you have to give up your favorite cereal - just try mixing in some shredded wheat. Don't deprive yourself, but add something good.



## Brown Rice

Brown rice is another great source of fiber, and it's easy to dress up with nutritious, colorful food. Try adding lean meat, baby spinach, and pineapple. If you don't like the texture, mix some white rice in with the brown. There's good evidence that brown rice and other whole-grain foods can help you maintain a healthy body weight, while reducing the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.



## Focus on the Good Stuff

When making changes to your diet, add good foods rather than denying yourself bad ones. As you get used to eating more fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains, these foods may come to replace some of the less healthy choices. You'll play better today and stay in the game longer.

## Fast Track to Bigger Muscles

There's no magic pill for getting ripped. But if you're willing to sweat, there are ways to pump up your physique in less time than you might think. With the right moves, you can work toward powerful pecs and bulging biceps in just two workouts a week. If you have a medical condition, check with a doctor before starting a fitness program.

### Bigger Arms: Hammer Curl

For biceps that beg to be displayed in short sleeves, start with a hammer curl. Hold dumbbells so they face your outer thighs. Exhale and bend the elbows, raising the dumbbells until their tips nearly reach your shoulders. Inhale and lower slowly. To see results, men should hit each muscle group with 3-4 different exercises, twice a week.



### Bigger Arms: Preacher Curl

This twist on the biceps curl will also work the deltoids, muscles that give shoulders a chiseled look. Rest the back of your arm on a support pad while holding a dumbbell, palm facing up. Slowly raise the dumbbell, and then lower it to the starting position. If any move feels wrong, check with a qualified fitness professional. Depending on your health and physical condition, some exercises may not be recommended.



### Bigger Arms: Triceps Pushdown

When building buff arms, don't neglect the underside. To do the triceps pushdown, grasp the handle with palms facing down and hands 6 inches apart. Keep your upper arms near the sides of your chest. Start with your forearms parallel to the floor. Push the cable down by straightening the arms until your elbows are fully extended, but not locked. Pause and slowly return to the starting position.



## Bigger Chest: Bench Press

This classic move hits all your chest muscles at once. Grab the bar with a closed grip and slowly lower until it lightly touches your chest. Exhale and press back to starting position. A trainer can recommend the best load for you; 50% of body weight (including the weight of the barbell) is a common starting point. The flat version works the entire chest, so there's no need to add incline versions.



## Buff vs. Mr. Universe

The right weight and number of reps for you all depend on your goals, and of course your physical fitness. Beginners can start with 3 sets of 10-15 reps for each exercise -- and the last few reps should be difficult. Those at an intermediate level can aim for 4 sets of 8-12 reps. If you're looking for huge, prize-worthy muscles, the best bet is to consult a fitness professional.



## Strong Shoulders: Front Raise

If hulking shoulders are a goal, muscle this exercise into your workout. Do it standing or seated on a bench or stability ball, with weights at your sides. Raise one straight arm to the front, up to shoulder level, while turning your palm towards the floor. Slowly lower back down. Keep an erect torso and neutral wrist position. Using one arm at a time makes it easier to keep the back straight.



## Strong Shoulders: Lateral Raise

This classic move targets the deltoids to create a Popeye-worthy bulge in this rounded area where the upper arm meets the shoulder. Start with the weights by your sides. Contract the abdominals to stabilize your spine. Then sweep both arms up to shoulder level to form a "T." Keep the arms relaxed and elbows unlocked. Rotate elbows slightly outward to isolate the shoulder muscles. Slowly lower back to the starting position.



## Tapered Torso: Wide-Grip Pull-down

Wide-grip pull downs develop the latissimus dorsi muscle or "lats." This back exercise creates the illusion of a narrower waist for that tapered look, says Pire. Sit on the pull-down machine and grasp the bar wider than shoulder width. Lean back slightly, contract your abs, and bring the bar down to your upper chest. Avoid using momentum. Pause and slowly return the bar to starting position.



## Abs: Kettlebell Twist

Men seeking the fabled "six-pack abs" first need to shed excess body fat, which can hide even the most toned mid-section. When you've reached a lean weight, the Kettlebell twist can help your abdominal muscles really pop. Sit on the floor, knees bent, heels down. Lean back, back straight, and engage the abs. Place the kettlebell on the floor, switching from one side to the other. Want faster results? Hold your feet off the floor.



## Quicker Results: Super Sets

To build rock-hard muscles in less time, try super sets. This means doing sets of two different exercises with little or no rest in between. Beginners should do supersets that work opposing muscle groups -- for example, a set of biceps curls and a set of triceps pushdowns.

## Quicker Results: Compound Sets

After you've been lifting weights for a few months, you can try compound sets. This means doing two different exercises for the same muscle group without resting in between. For example, target the chest with a set of dumbbell bench presses immediately followed by a set of pec flies. This exhausts the muscle quickly and thoroughly, setting the stage for larger muscle growth.

## Lower Body: Leg Press

Every gym's got a guy with "light bulb" syndrome -- a muscleman who neglected his lower body. If you don't want to be that guy, spend some time on the leg press machine. Place your feet on the resistance plate with knees bent at 90 degrees. (Don't bend your knees any further to avoid injury). Grasp the handles and slowly push the plate out until your knees are straight but not locked. Pause and slowly return to starting position. The leg press works most of the major leg muscles.



## Lower Body: Squat

Squats target both the inner and outer thighs. Use a barbell heavy enough to challenge the muscles without compromising your form. Position the bar behind your head with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keeping your spine straight, squat down until your thighs are nearly parallel with the floor. As you come back up, raise the hips and chest together. For safety, keep your knees behind your toes, shoulders behind your knees.



## Lower Body: Dead Lift

Yes, the dead lift shows off your manly upper body musculature -- but it's one of the best workouts for your hamstrings, too. Start in a standing position; feet shoulder width apart, holding the bar in front of you. Lower the bar to just below your knees, or further if you're more flexible and can keep a flat back and stable spine. Slowly return to the starting position. Keep the bar close to your body to protect your lower back.



## Lower Body: Calf Raise

Stand on one foot with the arch of the foot and heel hanging off of the edge of a step or platform. Hold on to something if you need to for balance. If you are able to balance without holding on, you will work your core muscles and promote joint stabilization in the standing leg. Drop the heel all the way down below the step and then rise all the way up on the toes. Hold dumbbells to increase resistance.



## Muscle Confusion

If you reach a plateau after several weeks of working out, it's time to mix things up. You need to constantly challenge or "confuse" your muscles to keep them growing. You can do this by putting a twist on your basic moves. For example, do a biceps curl with a reverse grip or find a bench for the step up move. For best results, change up your workout frequently -- at least every 4 to 6 weeks.

## **High-Intensity Training**

When you train hard, you won't just burn calories during your workout. You get the added benefit of an effect called excess post-exercise oxygen consumption or EPOC. This means your body will keep burning extra calories even after you've finished a training session. How long and how many calories varies with the intensity of your workout, says Pire. "It can add up to significant additional calories burned over time."

## **Eat Right: Before You Lift**

No amount of weight training will add bulk unless you give your muscles the right fuel. If you really want to get ripped, eat protein at every meal and snack -- lean meats, eggs, cheese, and milk are good sources. Add whole-grain carbs like oatmeal to provide sustained energy. Research suggests men who eat a snack of protein and carbs right before and after working out build more muscle and burn more fat.

## **Eat Right: After You Lift**

After lifting, take in some protein as quickly as possible -- the longer you wait, the more time your body will break down muscle instead of building it. Sports dietitians recommend having whey protein (found in dairy products such as milk and yogurt) within 30 minutes of your workout. Include a wholesome carb, such as fruit. One quick solution is a smoothie made with whey protein powder and frozen berries.

## **Stay Hydrated**

Muscles are about 75% water, so give them what they need by drinking enough fluids. Allowing yourself to get even a little dehydrated could compromise your workout, your concentration, and your immune system. While sports drinks and soda will keep you hydrated, the best choice is simple calorie-free water.

## **Muscle-Building Supplements**

Creatine is a popular supplement among athletes and body-builders. Some studies suggest it can increase strength and muscle mass. Evidence supporting the use of amino acid supplements, including BCAAs and glutamine, is less clear.

## **The Truth about Steroids**

Getting in shape takes a lot of work, but anabolic steroids are not a wise shortcut. Using steroids to build muscle is illegal and can cause many health problems, including:

- Acne
- Breast growth in men
- Heart disease
- Liver disease

## **Reality Check**

How fast you bulk up depends on at least one factor that is out of your control -- namely, genetics. Your parents determine your structural and skeletal shape and your predisposition to get big. But even if a bodybuilding centerfold is not your destiny, there's good news. Most men can noticeably increase their muscle mass and strength with an efficient weight training regimen.

## **Strength Training: Building Chest Muscles**

Building chest muscles through resistance training may help you get a chiseled chest. But it also will help you perform many everyday activities that become more difficult with age.

Starting at age 50, and especially by the time you get to be 60 or 70, activities of daily living — carrying groceries or cutting the grass — are much more limited by loss of muscle strength than by cardiopulmonary problems. Many people that age can still walk three or four miles per hour, but 70% of 70-year-olds can't get up off the floor. They're not strong enough to do that.

### **Building chest muscles protects against diabetes**

Building chest muscles — and all other muscles — not only makes you stronger, it also improves your metabolism by helping your body remove sugar from your blood. This protects against diabetes.

The more muscle mass you have, the easier it is for glucose to go into your skeletal muscle. And the more active that skeletal muscle is, the more glucose it's going to burn. Muscle contraction leads to whole series of events that enable muscles to use glucose efficiently and make the body more sensitive to insulin.

### **The importance of lifting weights while losing weight**

Lifting weights can be especially important when you're trying to lose weight. That's because when you restrict your caloric intake, your body burns muscle as well as fat for fuel, contributing to the muscle loss that comes naturally with age.

That loss of muscle mass is less of a problem if you strength-train while you lose weight. Instead of losing about 60 percent fat and 40 percent muscle mass, it will be more like 80/20. And because chest muscles are relatively large, they contain a lot of muscle fibers that can be developed.

### **Exercises for building chest muscles**

- The bench press works all the chest muscles and especially helps in building pecs. Lie on the bench facing up. Grasp the barbell on the stand above your head so your forearms are parallel with each other. Lift the weight off the rack and lower it to within a couple of inches of your chest. Then lift it again. For these (and all weight training exercises), exhale when you lift and inhale when you lower the weight. Use low enough weight so you can repeat this 8 to 12 times. After resting for a few minutes, do another set or two of 8 to 12 reps. When you can do more than 12 reps, add more weight. **Gym machines** make this exercise safer because the bar is attached to a stack of weights, which eliminates the possibility of dropping the bar on your chest. You can vary this exercise by using an **incline bench**, which lifts your torso to about a 45-degree angle.



- Another exercise that works chest muscles — as well as the arms, abdomen, and back — involves lifting a barbell from the floor, positioning it in front of your chest, and then lifting it over your head 8 to 12 times. When lifting the barbell from the floor, keep your back as straight as possible and lift with your legs. You can perform this same movement without the stress of lifting a barbell off the floor on several gym machines that allow you to sit comfortably, grip the handles, and lift.



## Building Arm Muscles

Ever since you were a scrawny preteen, you've wanted bulging biceps. Turns out that building arm muscles isn't just for show -- it's important for the activities of daily life.

The most famous technique for building arm muscles is the curl, which increases the size of the biceps. Some trainers, however, make fun of this exercise as “curls for the girls” because men often neglect other muscle groups in their rush to build biceps suitable for display in tight T-shirts.

But building strength and muscle mass in the arms isn't just for show. It's very important for activities of everyday life, such as carrying groceries, lifting grandchildren, and even driving.

## Keeping upper body strength as you age

Maintaining muscle mass and muscle strength is very important in the upper extremities. We use our upper extremities for so many activities of daily living. Resistance training is the best way to combat sarcopenia — the gradual loss of muscle mass that comes with aging. You begin losing skeletal muscle in your 30s. By the time you're about 50, you have approximately a 10 percent loss of muscle mass. After that it speeds up about two percent per year. By 80, you could have 40 percent loss of muscle mass. Anything you can do in terms of weight training and resistance training is going to help preserve muscle mass and muscle strength.

## Exercises to build arm muscles

- **Curls** can be done with dumbbells, a barbell, or a machine. Choose a weight you can lift 8 to 12 times in a row. If you use dumbbells or a barbell, make sure you keep your elbows at your side and don't move them as you lift the weights. If you find you have to move your elbows, reduce the weight until you can do the movement correctly. Most machines have you rest your elbows on a pad that keeps your arms in the proper position as you lift the bar. 
- The **close-grip bench press** doubles as a biceps exercise and a triceps exercise. Lie back on a bench and grasp the barbell on the stand above your head, but keep your hands about 18 inches apart — closer than you would for a classic bench press. Keep your wrists straight and your elbows close to your body. Lift the weight off the rack and lower it to within a couple of inches of your chest. Then lift it again. For these (and all weight training exercises), exhale when you lift and inhale when you lower the weight. Use low enough weight so you can repeat this 8 to 12 times. 
- Arm wrestlers often exercise with **hand grippers**. This device strengthens the hands as well as the forearms. Even for men who have no intention of challenging anyone to an arm wrestling match, hand grippers help build strength for common daily activities such as opening jars and carrying grocery bags. 

- Ordinary **pushups** work the same arm muscles as the bench press. The beginner will probably get the same benefit with pushups as with bench presses. However, as you get stronger, pushups won't offer enough challenge.



## How much weight should you lift?

The rule of thumb is about 60% of the maximum amount you can lift once. If you can lift 100 pounds one time, then if you want to sustain strength improvement, you need 60 pounds of resistance. As you get stronger, you add a little weight. That's the biggest advantage to weight training — you can increase the weight gradually and keep challenging your muscles. That way you can build strength and muscle mass without the danger of injury.

## Strength Training: Building Shoulder and Back Muscles

Your shoulders are involved in almost every movement of your arms. So you get plenty of opportunities to exercise them. But building back muscles requires more attention. Sure, your back muscles are at work whenever you're standing, but challenging them with resistance requires movements you don't make every day. For example, how often do you row a boat?

## Exercises for building shoulder and back muscles

- **Rowing** is an excellent way to build your back muscles. Gyms make this easier with a variety of machines that mimic the rowing motion. In rowing machines, you sit as though in a rowboat and pull a bar attached to weights toward you. This motion also requires you to push against a bar with your legs. Some rowing machines allow you to sit and pull a bar toward you, working your back muscles exclusively. 
- The **lat pull down** machine requires you to pull a bar downward behind your back, exercising your latissimus dorsi, or lat muscles, which extend from beneath the shoulders to the rib cage. These are the muscles that give bodybuilders the "V" shape they prize. 
- One-arm **dumbbell rows** are a safe, simple exercise for developing shoulder and upper back muscles. Place your left knee and your left hand with your left arm fully extended on a bench. Make sure your spine is almost parallel to the ground. With your right hand, lift a dumbbell, keeping your forearm at your side. (Don't lift the dumbbell toward your chest.) Use a weight that allows you to repeat this motion 8 to 12 times. Repeat with the other arm. 
- An exercise that works the deltoid muscles at your shoulder is the **shrug**. Hold a barbell with your arms straight down, or hold a dumbbell in each hand, and then shrug your shoulders. This may sound easy, but with enough weight you will feel your muscles fatigue very rapidly. 

## When should you stop lifting weights? Never.

While weight lifting has long been associated with bodybuilders and athletes, it is essential for slowing the loss of muscle mass that is an inevitable part of aging. Studies have found that even extremely old people — 100 years old and more — benefit from lifting weights.

Resistance training remains the most effective intervention for increasing muscle mass and strength in older people. The secret is to keep increasing the weight as your strength increases. It is recommended to do two or three sets of 8 to 12 reps. When you can do that, increase the weight. That's the main advantage to resistance training — you can increase the resistance. They used to call it 'progressive resistance training' — you can increase the weight in small increments and allow your body to make adaptation to new stress.

Resistance training has multiple benefits. Aerobic exercise is useful. It can increase energy expenditure, result in fat loss, and improve cardiovascular fitness. However, if you wish to increase muscle and bone mass, as well as muscular strength, power, and endurance, weight training is the best option.

## Strength Training: Building Your Core

You won't find "core muscles" on a chart of human anatomy as you will "pectoralis major" and "gluteus maximus." Core muscles are simply those that girdle your trunk and pelvis. But even though you won't find them, they're especially important for maintaining the stability of your body as you reach, stretch, and bend. Building core strength also could improve your posture and may protect you from lower back pain.

The method of exercise known as Pilates, which emphasizes slow, sustained movements that often involve lying on a large inflated ball, certainly works the core muscles. But resistance training provides a more focused and challenging workout that will build muscle mass as well as core strength.

## The problem with Pilates



Pilates may be good for the untrained, but the exercises don't offer the ability to increase strength. One of the major advantages to resistance training is that you can increase the resistance. You can progress in very small increments and allow the body to adapt. That way you can keep the resistance high.

The disadvantage of Pilates is that the exercises are based on moving your body mass and weight. So there's no way you can increase the resistance unless you change the exercise. As soon as you can handle the body weight, you'll cease to have increases in strength and size of your muscles.

## Exercises to build core strength

Because there are so many muscle groups involved, several exercises are necessary to build core strength. Let's start with a few exercises for your abs and then move onto exercises for your back muscles. The goal is to repeat the exercises until your muscles are fatigued.

- **Sit-ups** are the classic exercise for strengthening the abdominals, but some people find that they strain the neck muscles. Correct form is very important. You should start sit-ups with your knees bent and your lower back against the floor. Crossing your arms on your chest produces less strain than locking your hands behind your head. Make sure you bend at the waist as you sit up, not at your neck.



- Most gyms now have a **sit-up machine** that allows people to perform sit-ups while sitting upright — a position that does not strain the neck. You should first choose a weight that allows you to do 8 to 12 repetitions comfortably and then push the padded bar that is against your chest toward your thighs.



- A **back extension machine** works the lower back muscles — a difficult group to exercise safely. The movement on this machine is the opposite of that on the sit-up machine: There is a padded bar against your back, which you push backward.



- **Back extensions** provide another safe way to exercise lower back muscles. Lie on the floor face down with your arms at your side and lift your chest off the floor. If this is too difficult, begin with your arms parallel under your chest, forearms on the floor, and hands pointing forward. Try to use your back to lift your chest off your forearms, but let your arms do some of the work if necessary.



- **Leg lifts** gently exercise lower back muscles and abdominals. Lie on your back, arms at your side, and lift your legs about 12 inches off the ground. If that is too stressful, lift one leg at a time, and lift it only as high as is comfortable for you.



## **Strength Training: Building Leg Muscles**

Strengthening your leg muscles will make it easier for you to climb stairs, ride a bicycle, and even walk. And because your legs, especially your thighs, have so much muscle mass, building leg muscles through resistance training will help you burn calories even when you're sitting still. Muscle can really burn a lot of calories. When you have more muscle mass, your resting muscles burn more calories.

### **Exercises for building leg muscles**

- **Squats** are the most common exercise for building the quadriceps and other large thigh muscles. But squats must be done carefully to avoid knee injury. The basic squat involves holding a barbell on your shoulders behind your neck and lowering your torso a few inches by bending your legs. Never go all the way down — that puts far too much strain on the knees. **Squats** can be done **without weights** simply by standing with your back against the wall. Just lower yourself a few inches by bending your legs and stand up again. Never go all the way down into a crouch.



- A safer way to do squats is with a **squat machine** that requires you to sit or lie with your feet against a platform connected to a stack of weights. When you push against the platform, you lift the weight. Never extend your legs so far that your knees lock because that could cause injury. Repeat this exercise 8 to 12 times, until your legs feel fatigued. When you can do more than 12 repetitions, increase the weight.



- A **thigh machine** builds your thigh muscles by having you sit with your knees bent, feet locked behind a bar attached to a stack of weights. When you pull forward with your calves, the motion works all your thigh muscles. A similar machine exercises your hamstring muscles, on the back of your thighs. Lie stomach down on the bench and hook your heels under a bar. When you bend your legs and pull the bar upwards, you exercise the back of your legs.



- The **leg lunge** is a safe and effective method of working the legs. Hold a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing toward your body. Step forward with your arms at your sides, parallel to your body, and bend the knee of the forward leg, forcing it to bear the weight of your body. Return to your starting position and repeat with the other leg. Do this 8 to 12 times with each leg.



- To build your calf muscles, lift a **barbell** and hold it against your thighs, or hold a **dumbbell** in each hand with your arms hanging straight down at your sides. Lift your heels off the floor 8 to 12 times. Increase the weight of the barbell or dumbbell as you get stronger.



## Building leg muscles is vital to stability as we age

Not only will building leg muscles increase your resting metabolic rate, it also will increase the strength of a muscle group vital to stability. Data suggest that we have strength losses in our lower extremities that are greater than in our upper extremities. From a functional standpoint, it's important that anyone who does resistance training incorporate a variety of muscle groups, but especially in the lower extremities because leg and ankle strength are so important for balance and the prevention of falls. Everyone, no matter how sedentary or how old, can benefit from resistance training. Within two months, we can reverse three to four decades of strength loss with strength training.

## 9 Least Effective Exercises

### #1: Lat Pull-down Behind the Head

The problem: Only people with very mobile shoulder joints can keep their spines straight enough to do this exercise properly. So the move — done wrong — can lead to shoulder impingement or worse, a tear in the rotator cuff. And if the bar hits the back of the neck, it could injure cervical vertebrae.



### A Safer Lat Pull-down

On the pull-down machine, lean back a few degrees, use a wider-than-shoulder grip, and bring the bar down in front of your body to the breastbone, pulling shoulder blades down and together. Contract your abdominals to stabilize the body, and avoid using momentum to swing the bar up and down. The lat pull-down works the muscles of the upper back.



### #2: Military Press behind the Head

This shoulder move, in which you lift weights or a barbell up and down behind the head, can cause the same problems as the lat pull-down behind the head.



### A Safer Military Press

A safer shoulder alternative: When doing the military press, keep the bar or dumbbells in front of your head. Stand with the weight no lower than the collarbone and keep your upper body upright. The exercise can also be done seated. Always sit straight against a back support, and keep the natural curve in your spine, with upper back and glutes pressed to the chair.



### #3: Upright Row

The problem: Pulling weights, a barbell, or a weighted cabled bar up under your chin is a big no-no because it can compress the nerves in the shoulder area, impinging the shoulder.



#### Safer Alternative to the Upright Row

Instead of doing an upright row, work your shoulders with a front or lateral shoulder raise, lifting weights out to the front or side of the body.



### #4: Leg Press with Poor Knee Position

From a reclining position, you push the plate up and bring it down in this common exercise to work the quadriceps, hamstrings, and glutes. The problem comes when you bend your legs too far -- past a 90-degree angle -- which can hurt your back and knees.



#### Leg Press: Safer Moves

If you want to do a lying leg press, keep your butt from rotating off the back of the machine, and don't bend past 90 degrees at the knee.



#### Squats: A Safer Alternative

It's not necessary to use weights when doing a squat, but if you keep good form, adding weight will intensify the move. Standing straight with your feet shoulder-width apart, slowly lower your body, back straight. Move the hips back as if you are going to sit in a chair. Try to maintain your weight directly over your feet, keeping heels on the floor. Lower yourself to about a 90 degree bend in the knee. Slowly return to a standing position.



### #6: Bad Form on Cardio Machines

The problem: Hunching over or using a death-grip on the handrail cheats your body and can throw off your alignment, jarring your spine, shoulders, and elbows.



#### Better Technique on Cardio Machines

Don't set the incline or resistance so high that it causes you to hang on to the machine too tightly. Use a natural gait with a light grip. For a more challenging workout, hold on lightly with one hand and move the other arm, switching arms periodically. And save the reading for after your workout so you can focus on good form.



### #7: Exercises for Spot Reduction

People who do strengthening and toning exercises in an effort to trim fat from a certain area -- thighs, hips, stomach, or arms -- have the wrong idea. Although these exercises can help firm muscles, if the targeted area still carries an extra layer of fat, it won't look much different. You can't isolate fat loss to one part of the body.

#### Effective Ways to Reshape Your Body

Cardiovascular exercise will torch calories, but resistance training is a big part of the equation if you want to burn fat. Boosting your muscle mass increases your metabolism, so you burn more calories all the time, even when you're not working out.

## # 8: Always Lifting with a Weight Belt

The problem: Too many people wear weight belts too often. Unless you have a back injury or other medical reason -- or are lifting a lot of weight -- the weight belt may let your core muscles slack off. And you need your core muscles all the time in everyday life.

The solution: Back off the weight belt unless it's necessary.



## #9: Exercising in the Wrong Shoes

Even if you're doing everything else right, your efforts can be undermined by improper footwear. Working out with the wrong shoes increases pounding on the joints, and can lead to injuries like plantar fasciitis or tendonitis.



### Shoe Solution

The key, experts say, is to choose a shoe that is specific to your activity and that suits your particular foot. They recommend shopping at stores specializing in athletic shoes, where you can seek advice from a knowledgeable salesperson. And don't forget to replace your shoes when they show signs of wear.

## CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 2 QUESTION & ANSWERS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at [iridology@netzero.net](mailto:iridology@netzero.net) or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

1. What is the best source of antioxidants?
2. Ideally, you should eat mostly \_\_\_\_\_ food for most meals, and enjoy \_\_\_\_\_ as a small side dish.
3. Explain the difference between cardiovascular and resistance exercise.
4. The USDA recommends a baseline diet of \_\_\_\_\_ calories based on an adult with a sedentary job who gets two to three sessions of vigorous activity each week.
5. Where the term "cruciferous" originate?
6. What are "Sterols"?
7. Which antioxidant works against free radicals in the body?
8. What is the difference between Super Sets and Compound Sets?
9. What is the gradual loss of muscle mass that comes with aging?
10. \_\_\_\_\_ are a safe, simple exercise for developing shoulder and upper back muscles
11. Which is safer, the lat pull down behind the back machine or the lat pull-down in front of the body?
12. When was the last time you bought the right type of shoes for the type of exercise you do?