

Strength Training Tips For Beginners

Tip 1. Start Easy First you need to realize that your body must adjust to the new stresses placed upon the muscles, joints and connective tissues, and therefore it would be wise to take it easy during the first few weeks. This is referred to as a "conditioning phase" and being cautious will help you avoid injury and reduce post workout soreness. A good rule to follow for the first couple of weeks is to choose 6 to 8 exercises that involve all the major muscle groups, and use a weight that allows you to finish 1-2 sets of 10 repetitions of each exercise in your workout. Use body-weight where possible such as Air Squats for the legs and hips and Incline Push-ups for the chest. You would complete your program by adding 4 to 6 more exercises to include your back, shoulders, arms and abdominals. Keep in mind that while the idea is to take it easy during the first 2-weeks, your workout should be reasonably challenging--enough to let you know you have done some work.

Tip 2. Change Is Good All exercise programs must be modified periodically to ensure continued results. Once you've completed your 2-week conditioning phase, you should begin to increase the difficulty of each exercise. Although there is a variety of ways to accomplish this, I would suggest you begin by increasing the number of repetitions. However, instead of setting a specific number, try working within a rep range, like 15 - 20. This means that the weight or difficulty should be such that you are able to achieve 15 reps (with proper form) but difficult enough so you cannot get 20. Make sure to increase the difficulty whenever you are able to complete 20 repetitions. Right around 6-10 weeks, you will start to hit a plateau at which time you will need to alter your program. This can be as easy as changing your rep-range or as involved as designing an entirely new program. I would suggest a new program, as this will again put different demands on your muscles thereby forcing your body to adapt, and will keep things interesting. The point I'm making here is, always change what you are doing so your body has a need to adapt. This will keep your workouts fresh and ensure continued results and holds true with regard to aerobic (cardio) programs too.

Tip 3. Take Time to Rest Let your muscles rest. Giving your muscles a break after a workout is just as vital to success as the workout itself. When you perform a strength training program, you are actually breaking down or creating small tears in the muscle fibers. As soon as you complete your workout, the muscles begin to repair themselves. This rebuilding process takes about 36 hours, during which time your muscles heal and become stronger in anticipation of the next workout. This is why you become stronger over time and are able to lift heavier weight. However, if your muscles are not allowed to rest they will not heal properly and could result in strains or injuries. A proven method to follow is to perform a full-body workout 2 to 3 days per week, with about a days rest between workouts, such as Monday and Thursday or Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Tip 4. Work with a Trainer Most beginners need help and should not try to go it alone. If you're sick and need help, you consult a doctor, when you are out of shape, you should consult a personal trainer. While it may seem easy to follow a friend's advice or a routine you have found in a magazine, it cannot take the place of having someone beside you showing you the finer points of an exercise program tailored to your specific needs or goals. Think of personal training as a means to success rather than an unnecessary expense. Hire a trainer and get the results you deserve.

About the Author

Chris Nerat is a certified trainer with over 25 years experience, I specialize in strength training for beginners. As an expert in the use of free-weights, body-weight, and cable machines, I have helped men and women all over the country lose weight, burn fat, and gain functional strength while developing balance, coordination, and flexibility. His website: <http://www.fit4beginners.com>

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