

FITNESS

# Develop a weight-training plan

**M**achines, dumbbells and bands: they're tools of the trade to sculpt and strengthen your body. Strong muscles can prevent injury, bone loss and age-related fat increases. Developing a program to build muscular strength now can be vital to your health later, and will add definition to your physique. Here are some beginner, inter-



mediate and advanced strength training moves.

■ **Beginner.** Try using machines to understand your range of motion and proper form. Start with light weights and several reps. This approach will condition your muscles. After four weeks, add weight and drop the reps. Alternating between these methods will build strength, add definition and keep your muscles stimulated.

■ **Intermediate.** Moving into this fitness level, add free weights and your body's own resistance to your machine circuit training. Light dumbbells, barbells to weighted barbells provide a more intensive workout. Pull-ups, push-ups, dips and lunges are also great strength builders that rely on your own weight for resistance. Vary between these options to achieve greater results.

■ **Advanced.** Adding heavier free weights and resistance bands challenge those at the advanced level. Free weights place more weight on your bones and are ideal for maintaining bone density. To keep your workouts fresh, progressively add more weight every four weeks. Bands add difficulty as you increase your range of motion and they become stretched to their maximum. Work multiple muscle groups at once for greater returns.

■ **Technique.** Proper strength training, for all fitness levels, involves proper technique. Lifting weight greater than you are truly capable of can result in injury. It is more beneficial to perform a series of weight

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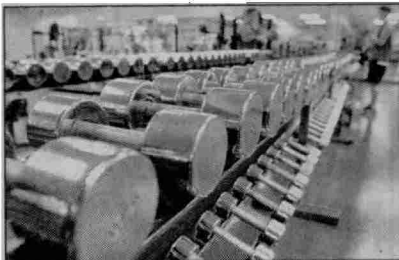
training movements than to lift too heavy and sustain injuries.

■ **Frequency.** Two to three days per week, approximately 45 minutes each session, should generate desired results.

■ **Reps.** Generally, reps are determined by exercise type and the amount of resistance used. Standard reps range from 12 to 16 counts. However, the key is to use maximum resistance during each rep. To prevent injury or decreases in strength gains, perform fewer reps at maximum resistance.

■ **Rest.** The secret ingredient is rest. Wait about 48 hours between workouts that use the same muscle groups, giving your muscles time to recover and rebuild, thus making you stronger.

Remember, strength training keeps your body strong and bal-



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Free weights are just some of the equipment that can be used in a strength-training regimen. **anced and your organs protected at every age. It is never too late to start.**

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