


Outdoor health tips from the Posse:

# Add strength training to your workout

Every morning I rise early, and head to our workout room. I run through a scenario of excuses for why I should skip today's exercise time, but none of them seem acceptable, so I trudge through my near hour long routine. After I watched 40 go past, I realized the importance and benefits of a solid cardio workout. Being able to run up and down the hills at altitude is important to me, so I get my heart rate up by running. You can do several different types of exercises that will benefit your cardio, but running works best for me. Keeping the joints, especially hips and knees, moving well is a side benefit for my run. I am fortunate that I have been able to keep much of the arthritis at bay (sins of my youth from fast boats in rough waters) by working my legs four times a week. During one of those annual "discussions" with the family Doc, he asked me about strength training. I explained to him that those days of weightlifting massive amounts of weight and trying to be a "muscle head" were well in my past. The good Doc went on to explain that adding strength training to a workout, especially after 40, is as important as cardio training. Strength training builds muscle, and muscle burns fat, even when we sleep. It can, however, be difficult to build muscle after 40. He went on to tell me of several other benefits of adding strength training to my workout routine. After age 35, we begin losing 1 to 2 percent of our bone tissue annually. You can offset those losses by strength or resistance training on a regular basis. When you subject your bones to high forces, such as lifting, you stimulate the growth of osteoblasts, which are the cells that build new bone, helping to minimize or reverse bone loss due to age. Another benefit of strength training is the kick it gives to your metabolism. Metabolism, like many other things, slows down as we age. As our metabolism slows,



**Mark Rackay**  
Tips from the Posse

we sleep more and the weight piles on, so it is important to kick start your metabolic fire. If it keeps me from getting colds and flu, it is all worth it.

The cells of our muscles require more energy than fat cells to function properly. As you keep strength training, you burn up more calories and build more lean muscle mass. As this lean muscle mass grows, your metabolic rate increases proportionately.

You can still build muscle as you age but you need to go about it correctly. The old bones and muscles do not heal and rebound as quickly as they did when we were in our 20s.

Researchers from the University of Oklahoma studied groups of people of different ages, who followed the exact same workout routine for eight weeks. They found that men between 35 and 50 years old built the same amount of muscle as men between 18 and 22 years old.

The study showed that the younger group added about 2 pounds of muscle, while the older group put on an average of 2.5 pounds of muscle. Strength gains for both groups were similar.

If you have been lifting for some time, you will notice the little aches and pains don't heal quite as fast as they used to. The cure is very simple: lighten up. The same holds true if you are just starting out.

Go for higher reps and lighter weights. Japanese researchers found that three sets of 30 to 40 reps stimulated as much muscle growth as three sets of heavier weights and 10 reps.

The researchers further found that lifting a lighter weight very slowly increased both muscle size and strength to a similar extent as heavy weight training at a normal lifting pace. The moral is whatever you can lift, from heavy to light, can build the muscle you want by adjusting your technique and reps.

If you feel tightness or soreness in your muscles after your workout, especially the hamstrings, glutes, quadriceps and hips, consider static stretching. Give the affected muscles a 60 second stretch. Studies have shown that 60 seconds will improve flexibility far quicker than the usual 20 and 30 second stretches. One stretch lasting 60 seconds or six stretches of 10 seconds each will work equally well. Do what feels best for you.

Start each strength-training workout



**If you are over 40, you should consider using weights like these in your strength training.** (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Mark Rackay)

with a brief warm up. A good warm up will reduce the risk of injury and improve your overall performance. Ten minutes on a stationary exercise bike will do the trick.

Work within your limits. For example, I have a wrist that gives me fits. It has been broken three times in my life and probably never healed properly. When I lift with it, the pain varies between unbearable and unbelievable, all the while emitting sounds similar to my breakfast cereal.

Because of this, certain exercises are off limits, such as palms down push-ups. I alter my routine to do push-ups on my fists or use a bar to grasp. Know your own limitations and don't try and be a 20 year old.

Don't forget your core muscles. The abs and back muscles are very important to heavy lifting and overall posture. Sit-ups kill my back so I bought an Ab Lounger, and the problem was solved. Again, work within your limitations.

Three days of strength training a week is plenty. Sure, five times sounds better but your body needs time to recover as well. Remember, those off days, where your muscles recuperate, are just as important as doing the exercises. If you must exercise more, use your off days for cardio training.

Always take your time. I see young

people in their 20s, run into the gym without a warm up, and head straight into heavy lifting. If I tried this, they would carry me out on a stretcher. Use your head and know your limitations. Remember, you just want to get in shape, not try out for the next Olympics. The whole idea of working out fails if you wind up in traction because you over did it.

In the meantime, be sure to get enough sleep, stay on a regular routine, and eat properly. All of these are just as important to your overall health as exercising. Seek the advice of your family physician and a good personal trainer before you attempt any type of workout. These people will prevent you from hurting yourself.

I have been working out regularly for a couple decades now and as long as I can convince myself every morning, I will continue. I really do feel better for it and I think you will too.●

*Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and an avid hunter who travels all across North America in search of adventure, and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org.*



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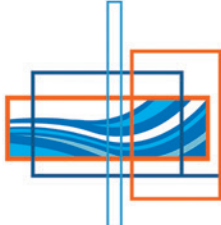
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