

Must-Do Strength Training Moves for Women Over 50

By Chris Freytag | Updated on May 19, 2024

✓ Reviewed by Heather Black, CPT

Life goes by too fast. The older you get, the more you may realize how important it is to make the most of each day. So, how would you like to slow down the aging process? While we can't turn back time, we can turn back the years on our body—with exercise. Strength training for women over 50 is a great way to maintain overall fitness and wellness as you age.

Research has shown that exercise can slow down the physiological aging clock. That's right, working out can keep you young.

While cardiovascular exercises such as walking, jogging, or biking are important for heart and lung efficiency, it is strength training that provides the benefits that keep your body younger, stronger, and more functional as each year passes by. If you want to be vibrant and independent for many more years, this strength-training workout will help you achieve just that.

Benefits of Strength Training for Women Over 50

Strength training is important for everyone, but after 50 it becomes more crucial than ever. It ceases to be about big biceps or flat abs but rather takes on a tone of maintaining a strong, healthy body less prone to injury and illness.

According to the American Council on Exercise, "Between the ages of 30 and 80, sedentary adults can experience as much as 30% to 40% loss of muscular strength as a result of reduced levels of muscle mass."

Strength training after 50 helps your body in the following ways:

- **Builds bone density:** Unexpected falls put countless older people in the hospital every year. An 8-year-old puts a cast on his arm and gets back to playing in 8 weeks. An 80-year-old isn't quite so fortunate. The ramifications of broken bones can be devastating. Strength training can help.
- **Builds muscle mass:** No, this doesn't mean you turn into the Incredible Hulk. It means that you are a solid, strong person who can lift their own groceries, push their own lawnmower, and pick yourself up if you fall down.
- **Decreases body fat:** Too much body fat isn't ideal for you at any age. Maintaining a healthy weight is important especially when it comes to preventing many diseases that come with aging populations.
- **Improves mental health:** Along with aging comes a higher rate of depression and, for many, a loss of self-confidence. Strength training has been shown to improve your general self-efficacy and can help lessen the incidence of depression.
- **Lowers the risk of chronic disease:** The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends strength training for most older adults to help lessen the symptoms of the following chronic conditions: arthritis, osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity, back pain, depression.

Strength training is a pretty good deal. For just 20 to 30 minutes a day, you can see big changes in your body's age. So let's get started. The following workout will give you 10 excellent exercises that women over 50 can concentrate on during their workouts.

Several exercises are going to include single-leg moves or stability ball moves. These were intentionally incorporated to help improve balance and coordination, both of which decline with age. You will need a pair of 3 to 8 pound hand weights (move to heavier weights as you get stronger) and a stability ball.

If you don't have a ball you can perform the exercises on the floor or a bench. For each exercise below perform 8 to 12 repetitions and rest for 30 to 60 seconds in between exercises. Move slowly through each exercise concentrating on proper form and continued breathing.

Also, it's always helpful to have a group to exercise with, so check out local workout classes or rally some friends. Additionally, if you have the ability to reach out to a fitness professional—even if it is just for one session—they can help take you through proper form and teach you how to move properly for your body. Enjoy your new fountain of youth.

Exercise Routine for 50-Year Old Women At-Home

- Forearm plank
- Modified push-up
- Basic squat
- Stability ball chest fly
- Stability ball triceps kickback
- Shoulder press
- Stability ball pull-over
- Stability ball side leg lift
- Single leg hamstring bridge
- Bird-dog

■ Forearm Plank

1. Begin lying on the floor with your forearms flat on the floor, making sure that your elbows are aligned directly under your shoulders.
2. Engage your core and raise your body up off the floor, keeping your forearms on the floor and your body in a straight line from head to feet. Keep your abdominals engaged and try not to let your hips rise or drop. Instead of 8 to 12 reps, hold for 30 seconds. If it hurts your low back or becomes too difficult, place your knees down on the ground.

Targets: shoulders, core

■ Modified Push-Up

1. Begin in a kneeling position on a mat with hands below shoulders and knees behind hips so back is angled and long.
2. Tuck toes under, tighten abdominals and bend elbows to lower chest toward the floor. Keep your gaze in front of your fingertips so neck stays long.
3. Press chest back up to starting position.

Targets: shoulders, arm, core

■ Basic Squat

1. Stand tall with your feet hip-distance apart. Your hips, knees, and toes should all be facing forward. (Hold dumbbells in hands to make it harder).
2. Bend your knees and extend your buttocks backward as if you are going to sit back into a chair. Make sure that you keep your knees behind your toes and

your weight in your heels. Rise back up and repeat.

Targets: glutes, quads, hamstrings

■ Stability Ball Chest Fly

1. Hold a pair of dumbbells close to your chest and place your shoulder blades and head on top of the ball with the rest of your body in a tabletop position. Feet should be hip-distance apart.
2. Raise dumbbells together straight above the chest, palms facing in.
3. Slowly lower arms out to the side with a slight bend in your elbow, until elbows are about chest level.
4. Squeeze chest and bring hands back together at the top.

Targets: chest, glutes, back, core

■ Stability Ball Tricep Kick Back

1. Holding dumbbells, place your chest on the ball with arms draped alongside the ball and legs extended out to the floor behind you. Keep head in line with your spine. (If you don't have a ball, lay belly-side down on a bench or stand with feet staggered front to back and body hinged forward).
2. Pull your elbow up to a 90-degree angle for start position.
3. Press dumbbells back to lengthen arms, squeezing triceps.
4. Release dumbbells back down to start position.

Targets: triceps, core

■ Shoulder Overhead Press

1. Start with feet hip-distance apart. Bring elbows out to the side creating a goal post position with arms, dumbbells are at the side of the head, and abdominals are tight.
2. Press dumbbells slowly up until arms are straight. Slowly return to starting position with control. If desired, you can also perform this exercise seated in a chair or on a stability ball with feet wide.

Targets: shoulders, biceps, back

■ Stability Ball Overhead Pull

1. Hold a pair of dumbbells close to your chest and place your shoulder blades and head on top of the ball with the rest of your body in a tabletop position. Feet should be hip-distance apart.
2. Raise dumbbells together straight above the chest, palms facing in.
3. Slowly lower arms behind the back of your head, keeping only a slight bend in your elbows.
4. Squeeze your lats as you pull arms back to start position above the chest.

Targets: back, core

■ Stability Ball Side Leg Lift

1. Begin kneeling with the ball to your right side.
2. Let your right side lean slightly on the ball and hug your right arm around the ball.
3. Extend left leg long to the side. The right leg should remain bent on the floor.
4. Slowly lift and lower left leg 8 to 12 times then switch sides.

Targets: legs, core

■ Single Leg Hamstring Bridge

1. Lie on back with bent knees hip-distance apart, and feet flat on mat
2. Squeeze glutes and lift hips off the mat into a bridge. Lower and lift the hips for 8-12 reps then repeat on the other side.

Targets: hamstrings, glutes, quads

■ Bird Dog

1. Kneel on the mat on all fours.
2. Reach one arm long, draw in the abdominals, and extend the opposite leg long behind you.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times then switch sides.

Targets: core, back

3 Sources

Verywell Fit uses only high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial process to learn more about how we fact-check and keep our content accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

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