

Starting a strength training program

Before you get started on setting up your routine, keep a few key points in mind:

1. **Always warm up** before you start lifting weights. This helps get your muscles warm and prevent injury. You can warm up with light cardio or by doing a light set of each exercise before going to heavier weights. Do not use static stretches to warm up.
2. **Lift and lower your weights slowly.** Don't use momentum to lift the weight. If you have to swing to get the weight up, chances are you're using too much weight.
3. **Breathe.** Don't hold your breath and make sure you're using a full range of motion throughout the movement.
4. **Stand up straight.** Pay attention to your posture and engage your abs in every movement you're doing to keep your balance and protect your spine.
5. **Check with your doctor or health care provider before starting any new exercise program.** Contact the COURAGE department if you have any questions on the exercises.

How to pick the correct exercises:

1. Make sure you choose at least one exercise for each major muscle group.
2. The muscles to work include: Chest, back, shoulders, biceps, triceps, quadriceps, hamstrings, calves and abdominals.
3. If you leave any muscle group out, this could cause an imbalance in your muscles and possibly lead to injuries.
4. Start with a light weight. Remember you can always increase the weight the next time. Avoid lifting too much weight.

How many times and how often should you lift the weight:

1. Do each exercise by completing 1-3 sets of 10-15 reps
2. Always remember to start slow and build up slowly
3. Take 2-3 days each week to complete the exercises

