

The UConn Buzz



Strength Training Isn't Just For Olympians

This summer we saw the awesome strength of the world's top athletes at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo. We also heard of their incredible training routines, which included strength training. But Olympic athletes aren't the only ones who gain from strength training. You need not lift 364 kg as China's Shi Zhiyong nor 128 kg as American Sarah Robles this summer to get the many benefits of strength training.

It is recommended that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. This recommendation is for activities that get your heart rate up such as walking biking or swimming. Additionally, health experts recommend strength training, involving all major muscle groups twice a week. ([Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#))

The benefits of strength training are numerous. These benefits include: improved balance, managing or losing weight, strengthening muscles and bones, improved mood, and maintain and improved cognitive health.

"Numerous studies have shown that strength training can play a role in slowing bone loss, and several show it can even build bone. This is tremendously useful to help offset age-related declines in bone mass". ([Harvard Health](#)) Activities that put stress on bones can nudge bone-forming cells into action. As you strengthen the muscle it pulls on the bone, which prompts the body to build more, bone mass. The result is stronger, denser bones.

Dr. Joseph Ciccolo, an exercise researcher at Columbia University "is studying the effects of strength training on anxiety, depression, and related conditions. His team recently found that strength training could

reduce some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in both women and men". ([NIH](#))

The effects of strength training help in other forms of brain health such as cognition. In a study done by the University of Alabama. "The results showed a positive effect of resistance training on composite cognitive scores, cognitive screening measures and measures of executive function, but no effect on measures of working memory. This may be due to the cognitive demands of resistance training, which requires planning and focusing on the details of lifting weights and body positioning. This form of attention training may explain why overall cognition and executive function are improved while working memory, which does not play an important role in resistance training, is not improved". ([University of Alabama](#))

Strength training doesn't need to be at a gym or using weights. There are many exercises that use your own body weight such as push-up or heavy gardening (digging, shoveling). You can also use resistance bands or certain kinds of yoga. Activities should use major large muscles: legs, shoulders, chest, abdomen and back. For more information on which exercises and how much go to the CDC's: [How Much Physical Activity do adults Need?](#)

Get Out There And Get Strong but remember before starting any new exercise program consult with you medical provider to make sure it is right for you.



Wise Choices (NIH, News in Health)

Lifting Weights Safely

Get started building muscle safely by following these tips:

- **Start slowly, especially if you haven't been active for a long time.** Little by little, build up your activities and how hard you work at them.
- **Pay attention to your body.** Exhaustion, sore joints, or muscle pain mean you're overdoing it.
- **Use small amounts of weight to start.** Focus on your form, and add more weight slowly, over time.
- **Use smooth, steady movements to lift weights into position.** Don't jerk or thrust weights.
- **Avoid "locking" your arm and leg joints in a straight position.**
- **Don't hold your breath during strength exercises.** That could cause changes in your blood pressure. Breathe out as you lift the weights and breathe in as you relax.
- **Ask for help.** To get started, schedule a session or two with a personal trainer, or look for a group class at a local gym, recreation center, or senior center.

Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Harvard Health, and the University of Alabama.

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Sunflower Harvest Craft Fair, September 18, 2021 10-2PM at Knowlton Memorial Hall, 25 Pompey Hollow Rd, Ashford, Ct Come out and meet some amazing local crafters and artisans. Delicious baked goods, handmade wreaths, artisanal candles, small-batch natural soaps, crochet, and knit goods, quilts, masks, aprons, and so much more!

Celebrate Tolland September 25, 2021 12-4PM at the Tolland Middle School softball field, 1 Falcon Way, Tolland. The festival will feature food from local restaurants, music, a kids' fun zone and informational booths featuring town departments, local non-profit and community groups and local businesses and vendors. Food will be available for purchase at modest prices.

The event is free. Parking is also free and will be available at the Tolland Middle School located at 1 Falcon Way.

Celebrate Mansfield Festival, October 2, 2021 2-8PM in Betsy Paterson Square Storrs. The Celebrate Mansfield Festival is a family-friendly affair. This year, they are designating Wilbur Cross Way as the "Kids' Zone" with fun activities for children concentrated together.

Thinking about joining a road race? If so go to : [Running in The USA.com](http://RunninginTheUSA.com)

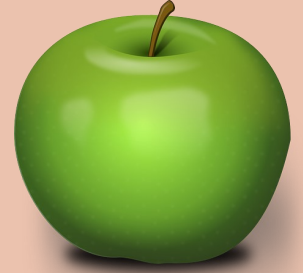
WHAT'S IN SEASON IN CT?
 Look for local: garlic, turnips winter squash, broccoli, potatoes, onions, carrots, cantaloupe and watermelon

Apple and Butternut Squash Soup

Adapted from Turnip the Oven

Ingredients

- ◆ 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ◆ 1 medium onion
- ◆ 1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped
- ◆ 1 large granny smith apple
- ◆ 1 1/2 lbs butternut squash, peeled and diced
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- ◆ 4 cups vegetable broth
- ◆ 1 cup coconut milk
- ◆ Chopped fresh mint, optional garnish



Check out the pick-your-own apple orchards in [Eastern, CT.](#)

Instructions

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and jalapeño and cook until softened and the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the apple and butternut squash and cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Add the salt, curry, cumin, and pepper and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, partially covered, until the squash is tender, 25 to 30 minutes.
3. Puree the soup with an immersion blender (or in batches in a regular blender). Stir in the coconut milk. Garnish with chopped mint.

Know Your Health Risks

Risk is something that involves exposure to danger. Risks are all around us but it is important to understand what are *your* personal health risks.

“Health risk factors are attributes, characteristics or exposures that increase the likelihood of a person developing a disease or health disorder. Behavioral risk factors are those that individuals have the most ability to modify.” ([Risk factors to health](#)). Yet this information can be confusing.

“Understanding health risks is key to making your own health care decisions,” says Dr. William Elwood, a psychologist and behavioral scientist at [NIH](#). “It gives your perspective on potential harms and benefits, so you can make smart choices based on facts and not fears.”

Risk does not mean that something bad will definitely happen, only that there is a possibility. For instance, knowing the risks and benefits of a medical treatment can help you and your doctor make informed decisions

Health risks are influenced by age, gender, genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Some things are not changeable like age but others are, like your diet, physical activity, and whether you wear a seatbelt.

“In many ways, our perception of risk is irrational,” says Elwood. “We sometimes worry over something that’s extremely unlikely, like Ebola in the U.S. And we ignore steps we can take to prevent what’s much more likely to harm us, like heart disease or colon cancer.”

The way statistical information is presented can influence the way we view our risk. According to the CDC 2017 data the leading cause of death for females in the US is heart disease (21.8%) but when the data is separated by age the leading cause of death for females ages 1-19 is unintentional injuries (32.7 %). ([CDC](#)) This is an example of the need to understand your personal risk including determined by your personal data.

To understand your own risks, and what you can do to lower those potential risks, start by talking with your doctor. Ask how you can reduce your risks. Measuring your

potential risk and the benefits of a medical treatment should be part of the discussion a patient has with their medical provider. Make sure to write down your questions and bring them into your next appointment You can also look to trustworthy websites—like NIH’s health.nih.gov— for reliable health information. You can also use tools such as the National Cancer Institute’s [Know Your Chances](#) or the NIH’s tool to understanding your stroke risk [Mind Your Risks](#)

Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, EHHD,

Find Information on

Covid-19 Vaccination & Testing at
WWW.EHHD.org

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

