Why Everyone Is Talking About Heavy Lifting During Menopause (And You Should Too)



If you've heard that women in menopause should lift heavier, you may be wondering what "heavy" means, and whether it's right for you.

Here's the good news: **heavy lifting doesn't mean maxing out, pushing through pain, or copying someone else's workout.** It means challenging your muscles with a load that suits your current ability, then gradually progressing as your strength and technique improve.

That kind of progressive strength training is getting attention for good reason. It can help you build strength, support muscle and physical function, and provide a meaningful loading stimulus for your bones. It can also help you feel more capable in everyday life!

Why strength training matters in perimenopause and menopause

Menopause is a life stage, not a single moment. During the transition and after menopause, hormonal changes can be associated with changes in muscle and bone. Age, activity, nutrition, health conditions and other factors matter too, so your experience won't be identical to anyone else's.

Muscle strength supports all the things you want to keep doing: carrying groceries, climbing stairs, getting up from the floor, enjoying sports and feeling steady on your feet. Stronger muscles can also help you feel more confident about what your body can do.

Bone is living tissue, too. Appropriate weight-bearing and resistance exercise create forces that bones respond to. That makes strength training a useful part of a broader bone-health plan, but **it is not a guarantee against bone loss or fractures**, and it does not replace medical assessment or treatment when those are needed.

Research supports the potential benefits, while also reminding us not to promise the same result for everyone. The LIFTMOR randomized trial found that a supervised high-intensity resistance-and-impact program improved bone density and physical function in postmenopausal women with low bone mass. A 2025 systematic review found that evidence in peri- and early postmenopause is still limited and results are not uniform across studies.

The takeaway? Strength training deserves a place in the conversation. Your program should still be built around you.



What “heavy” really means

Heavy is relative.

A weight that feels demanding for one person may feel easy, or far too challenging, for someone else. It depends on your training experience, movement technique, health, symptoms and the exercise you’re doing.

Progressive overload is the gradual process of asking your body to do a little more over time. You might increase the weight, add a repetition, improve your control, or progress to a more challenging version of an exercise.

You don’t have to start with a barbell. Body-weight movements, bands, dumbbells, kettlebells and machines can all help you build strength. The right starting point is the one you can do with control and confidence.

Heavy lifting isn’t a one-size-fits-all workout. It’s a sensible progression.

How to begin lifting with confidence

If you're new to strength training, or returning after a break, give yourself permission to begin with the basics. You're not behind. You're building a foundation.

1. **Learn the movement first.** Practice the exercise with body weight or a manageable load. Focus on a steady, controlled range of motion and a position that feels comfortable for you.
2. **Choose a challenging but manageable load.** The last repetitions should take effort, but you should still be able to maintain your technique. You don't need to lift to failure or test your maximum.
3. **Progress gradually.** When you can complete your planned repetitions with consistent control, consider a small increase in weight or another appropriate progression. Change one thing at a time.
4. **Train more than one area.** A balanced plan can include movements for your legs, hips, back, chest, shoulders and arms, adapted to your needs.
5. **Make room for recovery.** Your body needs time, food and sleep to adapt. A harder session is not automatically a better session, especially if you're already feeling run down.

Start with what feels achievable and build from there. For general exercise guidance, the 2023 Canadian osteoporosis guideline includes progressive resistance training as part of bone-health recommendations. Your personal needs may differ, particularly if you have a diagnosis or a history of fracture.

Who should take extra care?

Strength training can be adapted for many fitness levels, but some situations call for extra planning before you increase the load or add impact exercises.

Talk with your doctor, physiotherapist or other qualified healthcare professional before starting or changing your routine if you have osteoporosis, a previous fragility fracture, significant back pain, balance concerns, a medical condition affecting exercise, or symptoms that are new or worsening. They can help identify precautions and clarify what types of movement are appropriate for you.

During training, stop and seek appropriate guidance if you experience sharp or persistent pain, dizziness, chest symptoms or anything that feels unusual or concerning. You never need to prove your commitment by ignoring warning signs.

And if a particular movement doesn't suit you, that doesn't mean strength training is off the table. There may be another exercise, range of motion or setup that works better.

Technique before load. Every time.

Adding weight can be exciting. But good technique is what helps make progression purposeful.

A coach can help you find a comfortable setup, choose a suitable variation and notice when your form changes as a set gets harder. That support can be especially helpful if you're a beginner, returning to exercise, or unsure how to adjust around symptoms or an injury history.



At Fitnixx Coaching, our approach is individualized and non-judgmental. We start by understanding your goals, experience and needs, not by handing you a generic workout and expecting you to figure it out alone.

Our Bowmanville coaching includes a private garage gym, personalized programming, weekly one-hour personal training sessions, bi-weekly check-ins and monthly program updates. Nutrition and lifestyle coaching can also be part of the bigger picture.

That structure lets us adjust your training as you build skill and strength. **You don't need to arrive already fit. All starting points are welcome!**

Stronger for the life you want

The point of lifting isn't just to lift. It's to help you feel stronger and more capable in the rest of your life.

You might notice everyday tasks feeling more manageable. You may feel more confident using equipment, trying a new activity or sticking with a routine. Those wins matter, even when they don't show up on a scale.

No coach can promise a particular change by a specific date. Progress depends on your starting point, consistency, recovery and many factors outside the gym. What we can do is help you follow a thoughtful plan, practice the movements, and adjust as you go.



Ready to take your strength into your own hands?

You don't have to wait until you feel perfectly prepared. Start with a conversation about what you want to do, what's getting in the way and what kind of support would help.

Explore menopause coaching or personal training in Bowmanville. Then book a free consultation to talk through your goals and next steps!

You set the starting point. We'll help you build from there.