

Small Changes for a Healthier You!

Strength Training and GLP-1

by Casey Breslin from 20 Minutes to Fitness

If you're one of the many people taking GLP-1 medications like Ozempic, Wegovy or Mounjaro for weight loss, you already know these drugs can be powerful tools for helping to curb appetite and shed pounds. But there's one side effect that too often gets overlooked: muscle loss.

GLP-1s can lead to fast and dramatic weight loss—but that weight isn't always just fat. Without a plan to protect your muscle mass, your body may burn through lean tissue as well. That matters because muscle plays a critical role in overall health—especially as we age. Beginning around age 30, adults lose about 8 to 10 pounds of muscle mass per decade unless they do something to preserve it. After the age of 60, that rate of loss can increase even more. This age-related muscle loss can quietly erode strength, balance and health over time.

Why Muscle Matters: Muscle doesn't just help you lift your grandkids. It also helps regulate blood sugar, supports bone density, protects joints and keeps your metabolism active. The more you have, the more calories your body burns—even at rest. Preserving muscle means helping your metabolism stay steady, even as the number on the scale goes down. Less muscle means a greater risk of falls, fractures, insulin resistance and fatigue. In short: muscle is one of the most important assets we have for aging well. And when you're taking a GLP-1 medication that accelerates weight loss, it becomes even more important to protect and build the strength your body needs.

One 20-minute Workout a Week: One of the biggest barriers to traditional exercise programs—especially while adjusting to a lower-calorie lifestyle—is the time they take to complete. Our medically based methods are different. With just one 20-minute workout a week, you give your muscles the precise, targeted stimulus they need to grow. You'll train on specially calibrated equipment that was originally designed for physical therapy. Because your personal coach remains at your side, setting the equipment and making sure you use proper form, you'll work out safely as well.

Rapid weight loss can also take a toll on bone density. Strength training, especially the slow, controlled movements you'll follow at 20 Minutes to Fitness, builds not just muscle but stronger bones. It's one of the best things you can do to reduce the risk of fractures and maintain long-term bone health. It may sound too good to be true, but the science is clear—slow, high-intensity resistance training is one of the most effective and efficient ways to build and maintain muscle. And when you're on a medication that suppresses appetite, working out in a smart, sustainable way becomes even more critical.

If you're taking a GLP-1 medication, you've already made a commitment to your health. Strength training is the missing piece that helps make that commitment sustainable and successful—not just for the next few months, but for years to come. Your first session and consultation at 20 Minutes to Fitness are free. Contact us today to arrange a visit!

About the author: Casey Breslin is a physical therapist and general manager of 20 Minutes to Fitness in St. Louis.