

Aerobics vs. Strength Training

The infatuation with aerobic exercise as THE WAY, much like the no fat diet, has stuck, and stuck hard, despite the facts pointing to resistance training being far superior in many aspects, and a MUST for the aging populations. Loading the skeletal and muscular systems causes progression, adaptation, and preservation of muscle, the metabolism other hormonal functions, bone density, cardiovascular health, insulin sensitivity and the simple strength, or excess thereof, to continue to make life easy to live and therefore enjoyable.

Then we have the whole camp of, "Well I don't want to get HUGE, I just want to get toned." So what happens when women, and now increasingly men, turn to classic aerobic exercises, or even worse turning resistance training into completely aerobic activity by using such pitiful loads as to not stress the body at all in an anaerobic capacity. What is the result? They no doubt lose weight, which makes them happy, but sadly while the scale goes down, the body fat % goes up. They eat away at their own metabolism, lean muscle tissue leading to a downward spiral of appearing "thinner." but actually getting fatter.

By default, your body when put into any activity on a regular basis wants to make that activity easy. The body is lazy. If you're undertaking aerobic activity the fastest way for the body to make it easier is? Lose weight. What's the quickest way to lose weight? Drop the muscle tissue you're not using. Why? The body has no need for it; it is expensive (metabolically speaking) and you aren't using it when engaging in aerobic activity. However, the body WILL hold on to those stores of fat you are using as your primary fuel for your aerobic activity, and of course to sustain life. These people are looking to get toned. But TONE in and of itself is reliant on the very muscle they are avoiding to work and build. Muscle tone or tonus is a continuous and passive partial contraction of the muscles that are actually being eaten away due to peoples' misguidance.

Why you should Strength Train:

Surprisingly, this is a question that most people struggle to answer correctly (or maybe I should say, "Thoroughly") and I find that this is the case across a variety of populations. Invariably, strength training enthusiasts, medical professionals, and even fitness practitioners fail to understand the "why" of strength training. Of course, most individuals can identify a few key benefits including increased muscle strength and bone mineral density. But this barely qualifies as scratching the surface in terms of the health benefits associated with proper strength training. In a recent journal article published in the *American College of Sports Medicine's Current Sports Medicine Reports*, legendary

researcher, **Wayne Westcott, PhD** describes resistance training as "medicine" and outlines the key health benefits. **Dr. Westcott** concludes:

"This review provides evidence that resistance training is effective in enhancing several important aspects of physical and mental health. Beginning with the **progressive reduction in muscle mass and resting metabolism** associated with inactive aging, resistance training studies have consistently demonstrated significant increases in lean weight and metabolic rate, accompanied by **significant decreases in fat weight**. In the multiple areas that involve physical performance, resistance training has been associated with **reduced low back pain, decreased arthritic discomfort, increased functional independence, enhanced movement control, and increased walking speed**. Based on numerous studies that showed improved glucose and insulin homeostasis, **resistance training has been recommended for resisting type 2 diabetes**. With respect to cardiovascular health, resistance training research has demonstrated **reduced resting blood pressure, improved blood lipid profiles, and enhanced vascular condition**. Resistance training appears to have **greater impact on bone density than other types of physical activity and has been shown to significantly increase bone density in adults of all ages**. The demonstrated mental health benefits of resistance training have included **decreased symptoms of depression, increased self-esteem and physical self-concept, and improved cognitive ability**. Finally and fundamentally, **resistance training has been shown to reverse aging factors in skeletal muscle**."