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Women on Weights

Myths

“I just want to tone”

Ask 10 people and they will give you 10 different answers. What usually comes of it is being able to see the muscles without looking big. To do this you need to lose that fat on top of the muscles and work the muscles themselves to have the definition.

“I don't want to bulk up”

Women have 1/10th of the hormones necessary to 'bulk up'. When you start resistance training, you may see an increase in muscle before you see a decrease in measurable fat. Therefore, you may feel bulky, but it goes away if you stick with your program.

“How do I get rid of my belly/underarm wings/saddlebags?”

This is called 'Spot Reducing' and it DOES NOT WORK! No amount of sit-ups or tricep kickbacks will ever get rid of fat in one particular area over another. You will lose fat over your entire body, but you may not see it go as fast as you might like in particular areas.

Checklist

- ❑ Equipment
 - ❑ Proper footwear and clothing
 - ❑ Dumbbells or barbells of different sizes
 - ❑ Water
 - ❑ Gloves
 - ❑ Workout plan
 - ❑ Is it reasonable for the time you have?
 - ❑ Does it work large muscles before small?
 - ❑ Does it work multi-joint before single joint
 - ❑ Does it fit your goal?
 - ❑ Goals
 - ❑ Are they written down?
 - ❑ Are they reasonable and achievable?
 - ❑ Are they measurable?
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Resources:

- Strong Women Stay Young, Miriam Nelson, Ph.D.
 - www.shape.com
 - Getting Stronger, Bill Pearl
 - www.healthyutah.org
 - Move It! list serv: Get information sent to your inbox. Send a blank email to join-moveit@list.state.ut.us
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Training Principles

Progression: If you are not getting results, you need to change something. Each week, you should be able to do 10% more than you could last week, either in volume or intensity.

During the workout, move from large muscles to smaller muscles, and multi-joint exercises to single-joint exercises.

Overload: If you do not work hard enough, your body will not respond. You must reach the point in which your body cannot lift the weight another time.

Sets/reps: This is based on your goal. If you are trying to “tone” (see previous definition), then 8-12 repetitions and 1-3 sets will suffice.

Rest: You need to rest your muscles 48-72 hours between workouts, and 1:30-2:00 minutes between sets.

The Exercises

Chest

Dumbbell Chest Press: Adjust the incline of the bench to match your goal. Place dumbbells on legs and lie down on bench. Bring dumbbells to start position: upper arm parallel to the floor, elbow at 90 degrees. Maintain neutral spine, begin breathing out and push dumbbells away from body, opposite of gravity. Motion should take about 2 seconds. Under control, return to the starting position, breathing in. Motion should take about 4 seconds. Repeat.

Chest Fly: Set the bench as above, but face your palms together instead of toward your feet. Bend your elbows so that they are not straight, but slightly bent. Keep that angle throughout the motion. Keep your abdominal muscles strong. Move your arms so that your upper arm is parallel to the ground. Squeeze your chest muscles to return to the starting position.

Push-ups: This is one of the best exercises because you don't need extra weight and can do it anywhere! This can be done bent knee or straight, but keep your back straight. Go down as far as you can, as long as you can get back up!

Back

Bent Over Row: Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, facing a bench that is about waist high. Bend at the waist, placing one hand on the bench. Keeping your back straight, bend your knees slightly. Your trunk should be between 45 and 90 degrees. Lightly grab a dumbbell, keeping it directly under your shoulder. Keeping your elbow close to your body, pull the dumbbell to your shoulder. Under control, return to the starting position.

Cable Row: Each machine is different, but the principles are the same. Maintain perfect posture throughout the exercise. Keep your elbows in and pull the handle to your mid-chest. Return the weight to the starting position slowly and under control.

Pull-up: A difficult exercise, but one of the best. With your hands shoulder-width apart or slightly wider, pull your body up so that your chin is above the bar. If this is too difficult, place a chair or bench underneath you and only work on lowering yourself under control. Progress until you can pull yourself up.

Abdominals

The most commonly requested exercise information revolves around the abdominal muscles. This region is also worked the most by most people. Doing the exercises correctly will improve your efficiency and your results.

Crunch: Lie on your back on a soft but firm surface. Place your feet on a chair, bench or other surface that will allow you to rest your legs. Your knees and your hips should be about 90°. Grasp lightly your ears (not your neck), or place your hands across your chest. Flatten your back into the floor. Tightening your abdominal muscles, bring your shoulders towards your knees. Keep your neck in line with the rest of your spine. Return under control to the starting position.

Bicycle crunch: Similar to above, but do not rest your legs on a chair. Move your legs as if you were riding a bicycle, bringing your elbow to the opposite knee as you do your crunch. This will involve the most muscle out of any abdominal exercise.

Arms

Wall Dumbbell Curl: To do this without cheating, place your back against the wall. Your arms should be at your sides, upper arm against the wall. With your hands in a comfortable width, palms facing up, bend your elbows so that the weight is almost shoulder height. Do not move your upper arms!

Tricep Press-down: This is done on a cable machine. With your palms facing down, grasp the bar. Pin your elbows to your side; they will not move from that position. Slightly bend your knees and maintain good posture. Press the bar down as far as you can, pivoting on your elbows. Under control, return to a point in which your elbows are still at your sides.

Skull Crushers: Using either a bar or dumbbells, lie on your back on a flat bench. Maintain a neutral spine. You may need to bend your knees and place your feet on the bench. Extend your arms, wrist over shoulders, arms perpendicular to the ground. Keeping your elbows pointed towards your feet, bend your elbows so that the weight comes toward your head. When your elbow is at 90°, stop. Keeping your elbows pointed towards your feet, extend your arms.

Shoulders

Bent Arm Lateral Raise: Sitting on a bench, grasp the weights and place them on your knees. Keep perfect posture and bend your elbows to 90°. Do not bend or extend your elbows from this point forward. Keeping your wrists and elbows at the same height, raise your elbows to shoulder height. Return under control.

Shoulder Press: Sitting on a bench, make sure your posture is straight and tall. Grasp the dumbbells and bring them to your shoulders. Your upper arm should be parallel to the floor and your elbow is at 90°. Imaging drawing a triangle as you extend your arms over your head, bringing the weights lightly together. Under control, return to a position in which your arms are parallel to the ground. Do not go any lower.



Legs

Stationary Lunge: There are many variations to a lunge, but a stationary lunge will be dealt with here. Grasp the dumbbells, bringing them to your shoulders; stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Step forward so that your knee is over your ankle on the forward foot. Keep your posture straight, and drop your back knee towards the floor. Your front lower leg should not move, only bend at the knee. Return to the starting position. Finish one side and move to the other.

Sumo Squat: With your feet shoulder-width apart, point your toes about 45° out. Sit down as if you were sitting into a chair, keeping your knees over your toes. Do not go very deep, no more than 90° at the knees. Squeeze the buttocks together and stand up.

One-legged Squat: While this is a difficult exercise, it is also very efficient. Balance on one leg. Lower yourself as far as you can on the other leg, not allowing the knee to go past the toes. You will need to use the other leg for balance, as well as your arms. It doesn't take much to get great results with this.

Legs, cont.

Stiff-legged Deadlift: Grasp the dumbbells in front of your legs, resting on your thighs. Keep your feet shoulder width apart or slightly wider. Your knees should be straight but not locked. Focus your eyes on a point eye-height and about 15 feet away. Pull your shoulder blades back and keep them there. Maintain perfect posture, keeping your abdominal muscles tight. From your waist, bend slightly forward, allowing the dumbbells to slide down the front of your thighs. Your hips should move backward as you do this. Bend forward no more than 45°. Squeeze your buttocks together and push your hips forward, returning to the starting position.

Machine Leg Curl: Each machine is different, so use these general guidelines to ensure good form. Your knee joint should line up with the main pivot on the machine. The pad over your ankle should be just above your shoe. You need to be bent at the waist to get the most out of the exercise. Going up and going down should be slow and controlled and at the same speed.

Bridge: This is both hamstring and gluteal muscles. Lie on the floor, hands to your sides. Raise your pelvis up off of the floor, squeezing your buttocks together and holding. This is even better if you have an exercise ball.