I'm 63. Here's How Little Exercise You Actually Need to Build Strength Transcript

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Introduction and research

Is it possible to build Is it possible to build muscle after 50 without muscle after 50 without living in the gym? And living in the gym? And the answer is undoubtedly. Hi, I'm undoubtedly. Hi, I'm Deborah Atkinson. I am the Deborah Atkinson. I am the founder of Flipping 50, and I am founder of Flipping 50, and I am 63. And here is the truth.

63. And here is the truth. Why are you listening to me? Because I've been doing? Because I've been doing strength strength strength training since I was 18 training since I was 18. But here's why.

I have helped I have helped over 300,000 women so far, over 300,000 women so far, working directly with them working directly with them individually, in individually, in small groups, in small groups, in large groups, large groups, training hundreds of training hundreds of trainers, trainers, trainers, observing observing observing them during their them during their training. So, training. So, throughout my career, throughout my career, I can tell you what I can tell you what I've seen. And over the past I've seen. And over the past 3-5 years, more and more 3-5 years, more and more research on research on women in and women in and after menopause is telling after menopause is telling us that all of this is true.

us that all of this is true. So, just recently, a study was published that involved study was published that involved only 108 only 108 adults. Among them adults. Among them were both men were both men and women. 41% of them were and women. 41% of them were women. And it women. And it looked at looked at looked at the right time of day, the the right time of day, the ideal time of day, does ideal time of day, does it matter?

it matter?

Timing and consistency

The answer to this The answer to this question is no. So, question is no. So, whether whether whether you prefer to you prefer to workout workout workout in the morning, you in the morning, you feel feel feel stronger, or you prefer to feel feel stronger, stronger, stronger, more powerful in the afternoon, it does more powerful in the afternoon, it does n't matter. And that's n't matter. And that's also true. So you also true. So you may may may prefer to workout prefer to workout later in the day. But later in the day. But if you train if you train in the morning, you are not weaker.

in the morning, you are not weaker. You get the same You get the same results. There is no results. There is no difference. So difference. So you will get you will get results if results if you do it you do it consistently, regardless consistently, regardless of the time of day. And the only thing I would like to warn you about I would like to warn you about in this in this case is not to case is not to let it let it disturb your sleep.

disturb your sleep. So something So something more intense later more intense later in the day is much in the day is much more likely to disrupt your more likely to disrupt your sleep. So if you have sleep. So if you have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up or waking up too early, you might want to consider consider doing doing doing your intense your intense work early in the morning work early in the morning or late in the morning, and or late in the morning, and your light work later. This your light work later. This alliteration alliteration alliteration confused me a bit.

confused me a bit. Sorry about that. But that Sorry about that. But that was only one of the things the researchers were paying attention to. They the researchers were paying attention to.

Benefits of strength training

They looked at a few more looked at a few more things related to things related to what progress is what progress

is needed? And a recent needed? And a recent study study study involving a much involving a much larger number of larger number of people. So these people. So these randomized randomized randomized controlled controlled controlled trials, and then what are trials, and then what are called called called meta-analyses, which is meta-analyses, which is we looked at a lot of we looked at a lot of studies over a studies over a period of time and then we period of time and then we selected from them all, selected from them all, as far as possible, as far as possible, where they were where they were directly directly directly related. Sometimes you related. Sometimes you have to do that have to do that and you have to and you have to throw one out throw one out because it's not because it's not similar enough to the others. But these similar enough to the others. But these large meta-analyses of large meta-analyses of randomized randomized randomized controlled controlled controlled trials really trials really show us over time that we've seen what's that we've seen what's really important so that really important so that we can benefit from we can benefit from it. So, it. So, here's what we know.

Strength training Strength training helped women helped women reduce their risk of reduce their risk of cardiovascular cardiovascular cardiovascular problems. So, it's problems. So, it's not just about not just about muscles, it's about muscles, it's about everything. Your overall everything. Your overall strength improves.

strength improves. How much does it take? How much does it take? Twice a week, 30 Twice a week, 30 minutes. In this minutes. In this huge huge huge study, this study, this meta-study, meta-study, meta-study, they looked at how 30 they looked at how 30 minutes twice a minutes twice a week helped week helped increase increase increase bone strength. Bones are more bone strength. Bones are more stubborn, requiring stubborn, requiring more work than more work than muscles. So, we're muscles. So, we're talking about what talking about what works for muscles, we works for muscles, we want to make want to make notes about what notes about what worked for worked for bones. Because that's how bones. Because that's how bone gets stronger, bone gets stronger, actually in two actually in two ways. So, when ways. So, when pushing, she pushing, she gets pressure gets pressure directly from the directly from the lift we lift we do, or so, and from the do, or so, and from the dog.

dog. Directly from Directly from the lifting we the lifting we do, or from the fact that the do, or from the fact that the muscle strengthens by muscle strengthens by pulling on the pulling on the bone itself. So we have a bone itself. So we have a muscle that muscle that attaches to attaches to this one joint, this one joint, and then it and then it attaches back to the attaches back to the origin. We origin. We call this call this attachment. And if attachment. And if we force this muscle we force this muscle to work intensely to work intensely or we lift or we lift things from each end, things from each end, it pulls on the bone.

it pulls on the bone. This actually also This actually also increases increases increases bone strength. So, the strength bone strength. So, the strength of your bones is of your bones is directly directly directly related to the strength of related to the strength of your muscles. So your muscles. So if it works for if it works for bones, you should bones, you should say, "Yeah, it'll say, "Yeah, it'll work for muscles.

Routine and recovery

" If twice-weekly If twice-weekly 30-minute workouts 30-minute workouts increase increase increase bone density, they will also bone density, they will also increase your strength, increase your strength, potentially your potentially your muscle mass. Now, muscle mass. Now, if you're a woman over if you're a woman over 50, over 60 like me, we're not going to get, we're not going to get massive. I promise you massive. I promise you this. So, this. So, gaining weight is difficult.

gaining weight is difficult. It is hard earned. It is hard earned. You need to You need to spend many spend many hours. You need hours. You need to spend many to spend many hours in the kitchen when hours in the kitchen when you're not lifting weights you're not lifting weights or eating a lot of food or eating a lot of food to do this.

to do this. Most of us Most of us don't do this. We don't do this. We need strength for need strength for everyday life, to stay active, to do the things you, to do the things you love to do with your love to do with your grandchildren, with your dogs, grandchildren, with your dogs, to do to do to do gardening or gardening or mountain climbing. It is within mountain climbing. It is within your power. Twice a your power. Twice a week, 30 minutes, week, 30 minutes, that's enough.

Twice a week, Twice a week, according to the according to the recommendations of the recommendations of the recommendations of the American American American College of Sports College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), these are the Medicine (ACSM), these are the recommendations that recommendations that recommendations that coaches, coaches, physical education specialists like me, me, me, kinesiologists who kinesiologists who teach at teach at the university like the university like me use when we say, " Here's what you need to Here's what you need to do." This is do." This is a recommendation. "That's what a recommendation. "That's what we base it on." we base it on." Twice a week was Twice a week was declared the declared the declared the minimum stimulus minimum stimulus for muscles. However, for for muscles. However, for menopausal or menopausal or postmenopausal women, and postmenopausal women, and often older women, this may be, this may be optimal because we optimal because we need to recover very well need to recover very well. We. We need to need to need to recover, not recover, not feel pain, not feel pain, not feel aches, feel aches, rest, rest, rest, get enough sleep, get enough sleep, get get get stimulation from protein stimulation from protein and calories, and that also and calories, and that also requires time in between. So if you. So if you train hard all the time and train hard all the time and don't give yourself a don't give yourself a break, taking break, taking two days off, I don't two days off, I don't mean lying mean lying on the couch, but on the couch, but doing lighter doing lighter exercises, not heavy ones exercises, not heavy ones every day, you can every day, you can see better see better progress. Twice a progress.

Structuring the workout

Twice a week for 30 minutes, and week for 30 minutes, and this is what should this is what should happen during happen during these workouts. You these workouts. You want to do want to do movements like squats.

movements like squats. So you're doing a So you're doing a squat here, squat here, holding a weight here, holding a weight here, maybe a weighted maybe a weighted vest. Maybe when vest. Maybe when you start out, you you start out, you do squats do squats with just your with just your body weight. But movements body weight. But movements that force you that force you to bend your ankle, to bend your ankle, knee, and hip knee, and hip give you the best give you the best stimulation for stimulation for core muscles core muscles like your like your glutes, quadriceps, and glutes, quadriceps, and hamstrings hamstrings. These big major. These big major muscles are responsible for muscles are responsible for your metabolism, for your metabolism, for pulling on big pulling on big bones, and we don't want that hip to be weak, because where are we going to break, because where are we going to break if we fall? This is a if we fall? This is a thigh. Usually this is the thigh. Usually this is the wrist or wrist or forearm. And sometimes the spine or cervical spine or cervical spine also breaks. And as we spine also breaks. And as we age, we age, we develop a rounded, develop a rounded, kyphotic upper kyphotic upper back. We don't back. We don't want this, and want this, and it can be avoided it can be avoided with strength with strength training. So, training. So, twice a week, 30 twice a week, 30 minutes for minutes for muscle fatigue at the end of muscle fatigue at the end of each set. A set is a group of set is a group of repetitions. So I can repetitions. So I can tell you that I would tell you that I would like you to do like you to do 10 reps. You 10 reps. You will take a weight and will take a weight and lift it 10 times.

lift it 10 times. This is one approach. I This is one approach. I will say that I want you to will say that I want you to rest in between, rest in between, but I want you to but I want you to do three sets.

do three sets. And that's a good goal. If And that's a good goal. If you are just starting out, you are just starting out, you can do you can do one set a few one set a few times, say this times, say this week on Monday and week on Monday and Thursday you will do Thursday you will do one set of one set of each exercise to get each exercise to get your body used to your body used to it. Tell me how you feel. If you feel. If you feel good, we'll good, we'll increase this to increase this to two sets next week. In a two sets next week. In a couple of weeks we couple of weeks we will increase this to three will increase this to three sets. Now you'll sets. Now you'll be on the be on the support support support exercise for exercise for three sets and you three sets and you 'll work 'll work really slowly, when really slowly, when it gets easy, I can it gets easy, I can do it for 10, it's do it for 10, it's easy. Now you easy. Now you will will will increase the weight a little bit, and increase the weight a little bit, and so you will so you will alternate between increasing alternate between increasing and progressing in what and progressing in what you are doing. Also an you are doing. Also an important element, but important element, but listen, if you're listen, if you're a beginner, don't a beginner, don't get hung up on what get hung up on what you need to you need to do to

progress do to progress because you're a virgin.

because you're a virgin. When you're a virgin, When you're a virgin, everything matters. Just lift Just lift weights in an organized way, weights in an organized way, do a set for the do a set for the major muscle groups, major muscle groups, maybe you'll maybe you'll do three exercises at do three exercises at the beginning, and over time the beginning, and over time expand that so expand that so you're doing six you're doing six to eight exercises in to eight exercises in each workout each workout for the major for the major muscle groups. You'll muscle groups. You'll do push-ups, you do push-ups, you 'll do pull-ups, 'll do pull-ups, you'll do you'll do squats for the squats for the lower body, lower body, maybe you'll add in a maybe you'll add in a deadlift for the deadlift for the lower body.

And you'll gradually And you'll gradually expand on that so that expand on that so that you have a nice you have a nice little workout little workout with a few exercises with a few exercises for all the major for all the major muscle groups that muscle groups that can still be put into can still be put into half an hour and done in a half an hour and done in a very organized way.

very organized way.

Safety and exercise selection

Now here's Now here's a caveat. This a caveat. This half hour of strength half hour of strength training should training should be supplemented with a be supplemented with a warm-up and warm-up and cool-down. Don't cool-down. Don't skip this skip this part because even though part because even though you don't want to be in you don't want to be in the gym, you don't the gym, you don't want to workout want to workout for long, you want to for long, you want to do it safely.

do it safely. You want to warm up your You want to warm up your joints, and we joints, and we call this a call this a joint warm-up. joint warm-up. You will feel more You will feel more fluid, you fluid, you will move more will move more will move more smoothly if smoothly if you can do it you can do it this way. So, that's it this way. So, that's it. How long does it. How long does it take? Twice a take? Twice a week, 30 minutes week, 30 minutes plus a warm-up and plus a warm-up and cool-down. I'm working on a cool-down. I'm working on a workout that workout that probably includes probably includes six to eight six to eight exercises that target exercises that target all the major all the major muscle groups using muscle groups using compound exercises. This compound exercises. This means squats, means squats, push-ups, deadlifts, meaning push-ups, deadlifts, meaning you use you use multiple joints. Your multiple joints. Your little little little bicep curls are not a bicep curls are not a complex exercise. This is complex exercise. This is one joint and a one joint and a small group of muscles. It doesn't help you,. It doesn't help you, and by the way, you won't and by the way, you won't necessarily necessarily necessarily get great get great hands by doing them. You hands by doing them. You will get great will get great arms by speeding up arms by speeding up your metabolism your metabolism by training your major by training your major muscle groups. So they muscle groups. So they will come, I promise, and will come, I promise, and always later, when always later, when you sit down and you sit down and want to do want to do a little more for a little more for your hands, you definitely your hands, you definitely can. You may can. You may decide at that point decide at that point that I don't that I don't need it. Here's another thing need it. Here's another thing you should you should remember. Between these remember.

Nutrition and fueling

Between these workouts and before workouts and before you leave, you you leave, you want to be well- want to be well- fueled. So fueled. So if you've been on the if you've been on the diet train and diet train and you're recovering, you're recovering, grew up in the 70s and 80s grew up in the 70s and 80s, I get you.

, I get you. I am you. I think we did the did the grapefruit diet grapefruit diet and the Washington apple diet in my house and the Washington apple diet in my house. Actually,. Actually, it was one of my it was one of my favorite techniques.

favorite techniques. He was more He was more intelligent. But intelligent. But maybe we know this maybe we know

this exercise from our mothers. exercise from our mothers.

But here's the thing. But here's the thing. We don't We don't need to need to do this anymore. We need to work a little harder to work a little harder to provide ourselves with provide ourselves with all the necessary all the necessary micronutrients. So, micronutrients. So, if you experience if you experience cravings for sugar or salt, cravings for sugar or salt, eat a diet eat a diet rich in rich in micronutrients. These micronutrients. These cravings are usually cravings are usually signals. Someone signals. Someone is trying is trying is trying to whisper to you that to whisper to you that you are not getting all you are not getting all the micronutrients. So, the micronutrients. So, if you just sit down if you just sit down to a very filling meal, to a very filling meal, don't don't don't deprive yourself of deprive yourself of it anymore. And if you have it anymore. And if you have good protein, good protein, fiber like fiber like vegetables, and at the end, resistant starches or resistant starches or something like something like beans, legumes, beans, legumes, sweet potatoes, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white potatoes, cooked and then cooked and then cooled so that they cooled so that they are stable, don't are stable, don't spike your spike your blood sugar, and if blood sugar, and if you leave them you leave them at the end of the meal, you'll at the end of the meal, you'll be much be much fuller. So, this fuller. So, this protein, vegetables, and protein, vegetables, and fiber, first and fiber, first and foremost, kill foremost, kill food cravings, but they also food cravings, but they also increase your increase your increase your micronutrient intake, and you'll micronutrient intake, and you'll find that cravings for find that cravings for something salty or something salty or sweet sweet sweet are actually your are actually your body's signals that body's signals that you're not getting all the you're not getting all the minerals minerals minerals or vitamins you need. The message is or vitamins you need. The message is unclear. This is unclear. This is just a signal, just a signal, probably that you probably that you want chocolate. But want chocolate. But you may find that you may find that you don't need it that much you don't need it that much. You're not. You're not looking for something when looking for something when you're getting everything, and you'll you're getting everything, and you'll find that those two 30- minute workouts minute workouts are more are more productive. You productive. You have time to do have time to do more. You more. You feel feel feel stronger, more stronger, more energetic before your energetic before your workout and workout and recover better after recover better after it. So it. So make sure you make sure you consume protein.

consume protein. This doesn't require This doesn't require anything extraordinary. It just needs to be. It just needs to be talked about more talked about more because protein because protein was one of those was one of those things that seemed to things that seemed to go out of style. We go out of style. We want to bring it back want to bring it back. It should be in. It should be in every meal.

every meal. High priority High priority along with vegetables, and along with vegetables, and then start then start increasing your increasing your increasing your intake of intake of intake of resistant resistant resistant starches throughout starches throughout the day. I call it 1 2 3.

the day. I call it 1 2 3. We We We only have one type of only have one type of carbohydrate for breakfast. It could carbohydrate for breakfast. It could be a few berries in be a few berries in your smoothie. It might your smoothie. It might be, uh, some be, uh, some beans or legumes beans or legumes and then berries for lunch, and then berries for lunch, and for dinner you might and for dinner you might eat mostly eat mostly sweet potatoes and sweet potatoes and then some then some berries again for dessert. So berries again for dessert. So you've got the maximum amount you've got the maximum amount of carbs, and I know of carbs, and I know this goes against what you usually hear, but it helps, but it helps most women most women relax, relax, relax, feel full, feel full, feel comfortable, and you get, and you get the fiber to the fiber to help you with your help you with your bowel movements bowel movements bowel movements the next day, which is a the next day, which is a problem for problem for a lot of women that a lot of women that I've worked with I've worked with over the over the years, but they don't years, but they don't think like that. We want think like that. We want to make sure to make sure you have a you have a bowel movement every day. And the bowel movement every day. And the more you train, more you train, the better your chances of the better your chances of that happening, but first and foremost, that happening, but first and foremost, you need to you need to get that fuel. That's get that fuel. That's it. How to build it. How to build muscle after 50, 60 or 70 muscle after 50, 60 or 70, if you're here, I, if you're here, I also want to hear also want to hear your opinion without living your opinion without living in the gym. It doesn't in the gym. It doesn't take hours. All take hours. All you need is you need is focus and a focus and a plan. Let me plan. Let me know if we can know if we can help.