The Best Time to Exercise After 50 (What Research Really Says) Transcript

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Research on training timing

Is there a best time of Is there a best time of day to workout? day to workout? This question This question kept coming up kept coming up after that after that recent video.

recent video. So, if you haven't So, if you haven't seen that video, we'll seen that video, we'll add a link to add a link to it in the description. And it in the description. And the answer to the answer to the question of whether there is a the question of whether there is a best time to best time to exercise… I gave it in a exercise… I gave it in a recent recent recent podcast where I podcast where I reviewed the research.

reviewed the research. Now I'll tell you Now I'll tell you everything as it is. 108 people participated in the study. Only 41% of them, or of them, or approximately 45 people, approximately 45 people, were women. So, not were women. So, not quite 50%, but it gives quite 50%, but it gives some idea. These some idea. These were adults between the ages of were adults between the ages of 60 and 80. So 60 and 80. So if you are younger, does if you are younger, does this apply to us this apply to us if we are over 50? I would if we are over 50? I would say yes. I am 63.

say yes. I am 63. This applies to me This applies to me directly. But directly. But the question they the question they were trying to were trying to were trying to answer was answer was this. Is there a best this. Is there a best time of day to train to gain to gain the most strength or the the most strength or the greatest greatest greatest positive effect on positive effect on muscle mass? Here's the muscle mass? Here's the short answer, and short answer, and then I'll explain, and then I'll explain, and at the end of this at the end of this episode, this video, episode, this video, I'll give my personal, I'll give my personal, professional answer, after 43 years of working, after 43 years of working mostly with mostly with middle-aged women. With both middle-aged women. With both men and men and women, but for the last women, but for the last 12 years, only with 12 years, only with women over 40. And here's women over 40.

Study methodology and findings

And here's what I found: In this what I found: In this study, people study, people were tested at 8:00 a.m., were tested at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. I would 12:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. I would n't recommend doing n't recommend doing strength strength strength training or training or intense intense intense exercise at 8pm.

exercise at 8pm. Personally, I'm Personally, I'm already in my pajamas at this time. I don't know already in my pajamas at this time. I don't know about you, but it's probably not a about you, but it's probably not a good idea to get aroused right get aroused right before bed. Even before bed. Even if you missed your if you missed your workout that day, workout that day, I would recommend getting a good I would recommend getting a good rest, getting some sleep, and rest, getting some sleep, and then maybe then maybe doing it tomorrow.

doing it tomorrow. Just postpone it for a Just postpone it for a day. Consistency day. Consistency matters, but I would matters, but I would say: don't neglect say: don't neglect sleep. So, 108 people, 41% of sleep. So, 108 people, 41% of whom were women, whom were women, were each tested at these were each tested at these times: 8:00, 12:00, 16:00, and 20:00.

They identified their They identified their preferences. They preferences. They asked: "I'm more asked: "I'm more comfortable at 4:00 PM." And comfortable at 4:00 PM." And each person each person felt: "I am felt: "I am stronger during this period of stronger during this period of time." Maybe I could have time." Maybe I could have lifted a little more lifted a little more and it wouldn't have required much and it wouldn't have required much effort. So after effort. So after testing, they testing, they were divided into groups. There is always a control is always a control group that group that did nothing. Then there is the group did nothing. Then there is the group that was taken at their that was taken at their strongest time of strongest time of day, perhaps 4:00 p.m. And day, perhaps 4:00 p.m.

And they specifically they specifically made them lift made them lift weights at 8:00 AM, when weights at 8:00 AM, when they're not at their peak strength.

they're not at their peak strength. And they also made them And they also made them lift weights during lift weights during their strongest their strongest time of day. Another group time of day. Another group did just that. What did did just that.

Practical tips for consistency

What did they discover? No they discover? No significant difference. It doesn't significant difference. It doesn't matter if we matter if we prefer 4:00 PM, but because of your schedule, but because of your schedule or because you know your schedule will be your schedule will be disrupted by someone disrupted by someone else's needs.

If you're procrastinating, If you're procrastinating, working out first thing in the working out first thing in the morning is often the morning is often the best solution. For best solution. For 43 years now, that's exactly what I've had to do. And here's what I do. And here's what I always say: very always say: very few people few people will bother you at 5:30 will bother you at 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning. But you or 6:00 in the morning. But you get a bunch of get a bunch of interruptions by 5:30 or 6:00 interruptions by 5:30 or 6:00 PM. Or you PM. Or you make up a bunch of make up a bunch of excuses about why the day excuses about why the day was long, I'm was long, I'm dehydrated, dehydrated, dehydrated, hungry, or hungry, or tired. I still tired. I still have to cook have to cook dinner, and you're trapped dinner, and you're trapped.

. So I would always say So I would always say that the morning is probably the that the morning is probably the best time to best time to exercise for exercise for most of us, but most of us, but that may not be the case that may not be the case for you, if you for you, if you wake up feeling stiff and it's uncomfortable for and it's uncomfortable for you, that's something to you, that's something to consider. And by the way, consider. And by the way, I don't think any of us I don't think any of us fix what isn't fix what isn't broken. If you broken. If you think, "I've been think, "I've been training training training later all my life, I'm later all my life, I'm consistent, it consistent, it works," I would works," I would continue to do so. You are your own continue to do so. You are your own boss, you boss, you know yourself, you know know yourself, you know what works, and if that's the case what works, and if that's the case —great. There's —great. There's also a study also a study that I did that I did probably about 25 years ago probably about 25 years ago where we looked at where we looked at body temperature, and there's a body temperature, and there's a slight difference in slight difference in our our our body temperature from early in the morning body temperature from early in the morning compared to late in the compared to late in the afternoon. And this increase afternoon.

Considerations for midlife

And this increase around 4:00 PM, when around 4:00 PM, when our body temperature is a little higher our body temperature is a little higher,,, can make someone can make someone who is otherwise stiff or perhaps has arthritis perhaps has arthritis feel that movements feel that movements are easier, are easier, smoother, and the range of smoother, and the range of motion is better. This may motion is better. This may make it more conducive for you to want to exercise. And exercise. And if your motivation is if your motivation is higher later in the day, I higher later in the day, I say—go for it. I say—go for it. I say there is no problem with that say there is no problem with that. Because. Because again, if you again, if you look back on your look back on your life and see that you life and see that you consistently trained consistently trained later in the day instead of later in the day instead of early in the morning, you're early in the morning, you're probably winning this probably winning this battle for body composition, battle for body composition, muscle, and maintaining muscle, and maintaining mobility. But it mobility. But it can also mean can also mean that if you that if you feel feel feel uncomfortable doing uncomfortable doing mobility exercises, mobility exercises, such as such as yoga or Pilates yoga or Pilates in the morning, later in in the morning, later in the day may be a the day may be a better time to do it.

better time to do it. Now, Now, Now, going back to my going back to my work, where I work, where I mostly work with mostly work with women after 40, women after 40, that is, in that is, in perimenopause, perimenopause, perimenopause, menopausal menopausal menopausal transition, or transition, or postmenopause, for

postmenopause, for many women there is a many women there is a difference. I work difference. I work with many health and fitness professionals health and fitness professionals who teach classes, who teach classes, and of course, and of course, train themselves, as well as train themselves, as well as regular people like you and me: you and me: moms, stay-at- moms, stay-at- home moms, business owners, corporate or medical professionals, or medical professionals, but most of us but most of us struggle to stay struggle to stay consistent.

consistent. Consistency matters Consistency matters in all in all circumstances. If you circumstances. If you are under are under a lot of stress and are a menopausal woman, you may find it more menopausal woman, you may find it more beneficial beneficial beneficial to do to do to do intense exercise intense exercise earlier in the day so that you can get a earlier in the day so that you can get a good good good night's sleep later. Excessive night's sleep later. Excessive activity activity activity at the end of the day can at the end of the day can negatively affect negatively affect your sleep. This is not your sleep. This is not necessarily the case, but necessarily the case, but this would be my advice this would be my advice to you if you were to you if you were training intensely late in training intensely late in the afternoon. Maybe you the afternoon.

Final recommendations

Maybe you go straight from work go straight from work to bootcamp. Even to bootcamp. Even if you love if you love bootcamp, and I am someone bootcamp, and I am someone who loved who loved endurance exercise, it didn't endurance exercise, it didn't help me much, and help me much, and while I loved it, while I loved it, it soon had a it soon had a negative impact negative impact on my body composition on my body composition as I reached as I reached menopause and menopause and postmenopause. This postmenopause. This wasn't the ideal wasn't the ideal solution for me.

Even though I've been training like this Even though I've been training like this for decades and for decades and doing it successfully and doing it successfully and easily, suddenly you easily, suddenly you reach a critical reach a critical mass due to maybe mass due to maybe too many too many stressors, too stressors, too many toxins. And it's many toxins. And it's not something that will happen to not something that will happen to every woman, but I every woman, but I want you to be want you to be prepared and know: if prepared and know: if it happens to you, it happens to you, it's not your fault. We it's not your fault. We don't always notice don't always notice that caring for that caring for loved ones, work, loved ones, work, exposure to mold, exposure to mold, the need to constantly the need to constantly move, and workouts move, and workouts that used to that used to help you can help you can become part of your become part of your overall overall overall stress stress stress load and load and need to change.

So, knowing that So, knowing that studies studies studies show show show no difference no difference in time of day for in time of day for building strength and building strength and muscle mass, muscle mass, the answer is yes, it is the answer is yes, it is possible. Even if possible. Even if you prefer a you prefer a certain part of the day, certain part of the day, changing the time will not affect changing the time will not affect your results.

your results. So any time So any time you can you can practice and be practice and be consistent—that's consistent—that's consistent—that's great. Do it.

great. Do it. If you are a woman who If you are a woman who feels, "I'm not feels, "I'm not getting the getting the results I want, and results I want, and maybe it's working maybe it's working against me." I would against me." I would recommend intense recommend intense workouts in the morning, workouts in the morning, and light exercises if and light exercises if you train later.

So instead of So instead of catching up on an catching up on an catching up on an intense intense intense workout in the evening workout in the evening because you because you missed it in the morning, missed it in the morning, try a walk try a walk or yoga at the end of or yoga at the end of the day. This may be the day. This may be useful. But when it comes to useful. But when it comes to the best the best time to exercise, it all time to exercise, it all comes down to the old comes down to the old truism: the best time is when you when you do it. So, if do it. So, if you have a question you have a question about this, I would love to about this, I would love to hear your thoughts: hear your thoughts: when do you when do you like to train the most? And a like to train the most? And a side

question: side question: when are you when are you most likely most likely most likely to be able to do this to be able to do this without any obstacles? These are two without any obstacles? These are two different questions.

different questions. See you on the other See you on the other side.