There is no need to feel shy, uncomfortable, or out of place in a fitness environment regardless of your age. Fitness during every stage of life is important to maintaining healthy muscle mass, healthy weight, cardiovascular health, bone strength, balance, cognitive function, and adequate mobility. These things become even more important in the later stages of life to ensure a healthy, active, and fulfilling retirement.

Although many seniors are hesitant to join a fitness facility after reaching their sixties, there are many at home exercises that can be done with or without weights depending on your comfort level. If you are not comfortable going to a gym simply lifting light weights or using a resistance band 2-3 times a week can do wonders for your ability to move and your stability when walking.

Most seniors are aware that exercise is essential for good health in old age, but many of them do not know exactly what exercise does for the body. Lifting weights creates friction in the joints, which triggers osteoblasts to come into the joint and to lay down new bone. This process increases the density of bone, and makes bones more resistant to breakage in the event of a fall.

Lifting weights can also help to combat the effects of many conditions that seniors develop later on in life such as osteoporosis. Strength training as described above helps to build new bone tissue thus making it stronger and denser. This increase in the density of the bone along with increased muscle strength can prevent osteoarthritis from limiting your ability to move.

By: Victoria Lawton

Strengthening the arm muscles make activities such as getting out of bed and chairs easy to
Strength training was able to significantly improve their cognitive function.

Another benefit to exercise is increasing muscle mass throughout the body. When lifting weights one creates strain on the muscle causing it to lay down more fibers which in turn increases the size of the muscles in that part of the body. According to Livestrong.com after the age of fifty the average person loses approximately .4 lbs of muscle each year if they do not exercise, so seniors should make exercising a priority! (Ray, 2011)

Maintaining a healthy amount of muscle not only allows you to keep your strength, it also helps you to be more stable when walking and climbing stairs and makes it easier to get up out of bed or a chair.

Many seniors lose the strength in their bodies because they aren’t as active as they once were and they are given more assistance than before. This extra assistance leaves them with few physical activities to do in their everyday lives (ie cleaning, gardening, carrying laundry) so they must now supplement their schedule with planned physical activity to ensure that they can retain their muscular strength. Those that choose to supplement keep their strength and are consequently able to get out and do more things without the need of a cane, walker, or electric scooter.

Research is also starting to show a relationship between strength training and improved cognitive function, at least in women. A study done with elderly women, ages 70-80, who were exhibiting early dementia symptoms showed that strength training was able to significantly improve their cognitive function. (Mozes, 2012)

“...Strength training was able to significantly improve their cognitive function.”

Strength training is probably the best thing that seniors can do to keep them mobile and able to enjoy their retirement years. Strength training can keep seniors independent longer and allow them to live without too much assistance. Besides this stronger muscles can make it easier to get out of bed and chairs unassisted, help to prevent falls, combat osteoporosis, and ward off the onset of Alzheimer’s.
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<td>- improving muscular strength isn't only for younger adults - details the confidence that strength training can give to the elderly, among other benefits</td>
<td>- Senior citizens</td>
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<td>- types of exercises that are beneficial and safe for seniors</td>
<td>- Seniors that want to do different kinds of exercise, traditional and new</td>
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<td>- a 10 minute chair exercise with light weights - safest/most realistic exercise video on youtube for seniors</td>
<td>- Seniors looking for low impact, light weight exercise video to follow</td>
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Tips for starting a weightlifting program:

- Ask your doctor before beginning any exercise program
- Start slow, using smaller weights
- Go at your own pace, do not feel rushed
- Take at least a 48 hour break in between lifting sessions
- Monitor your heart rate during exercise
- Focus on technique not the number of repetitions
- Stay hydrated