



## Strength Training For Beginners

### **Before you begin: Start with your *why* for strength training**

#### **Terminology:**

- Reps: 1 time performing an exercise through it's full range of motion
  - i.e. 1 squat or 1 biceps curl
- Sets: A round of a particular exercise, multiple sets in a row
  - i.e. 8 squats or 12 biceps curls
  - The number will depend on your goals for the exercise, such as endurance or hypertrophy (see below)
- Super Set: performing sets of 2 or more exercises performed back to back with no rest between sets
  - i.e. 10 pushups followed immediately by 10 biceps curls
- Drop Set
- Concentric phase: the part of the exercise when the muscle is shortening
  - This is also allied the "positive phase" and refers to the portion of the exercise we most often think of or when we are lifting the weight up
  - i.e. pulling yourself up for a pull-up or bending your elbow for a biceps curl
- Eccentric phase: the part of the exercise when the muscle is lengthening
  - This is also called the "negative phase" and refers to the portion of the exercise when we are returning to our starting position or controlling the lowering of a weight
  - i.e. lowering down slowly to a hanging position after performing a pull up or slowly extending your elbow during a biceps curl
- Isometric phase: when the muscle is contracting but is neither shortening or lengthening
  - This is when you're activating a muscle but are not moving
  - i.e. holding a dumbbell with your elbow bent at 90 degrees or pressing out into a resistance band around your thighs and holding for a count of 10

## 2 Main Types of Training or Areas for Focus:

- Strength:
  - Main idea: higher load/resistance, less repetitions; progressively increase load and volume as tolerated
  - To improve muscle strength choose a load that causes fatigue and decreased control after 8-12 repetitions for 2-3 sets
  - Takes 2-3 (mostly due to increased muscular recruitment)
- Endurance
  - Main idea: lower load/resistance, higher repetitions; progressively increase load and volume as tolerate
  - To improve muscle endurance choose submaximal load and perform many repetitions i.e. 20-30 repetitions for 3-5 sets
  - Takes 4-8 weeks

## Important notes:

- Form
  - It sounds like a tired, overstated reminder but form is key for a number of reasons including:
    - 1) It keeps you safe and helps avoid injury
    - 2) You are more likely to actually target the muscle(s) you desire instead of compensating with other muscles
    - 3) By moving in a controlled manner you engage your muscles throughout the exercise and don't rely on momentum to assist yourself
- Rest time/Recovery
  - Depending on the type of training or area you're focused on (see above) your rest time between sets will vary
    - i.e. very little rest for endurance training
  - It is necessary to take rest days to allow your body to recover. Even though it seems counterintuitive, working out as hard as you can 7 days a week is not the way to go. Work smarter.
- Paced breathing
  - Remember to breathe! As obvious as it sounds many people hold their breath when lifting weights or performing other exercise in an attempt to generate more force and because they can only focus on so many things
  - Focus on inhaling during the eccentric part of the exercise and exhale during the concentric part
    - i.e. during a biceps curl exhale when bending your elbow and inhale when slowly allowing your elbow to straighten or during a squat inhale as you bend and lower and exhale as you stand up
  - If possible try to breathe in slowly through your nose and exhale through pursed lips out of your mouth