

# ***In motion 101:***

## ***Beginner's Guide to Strength Training***

Strength training is considered a very important part of any physical activity plan, along with other activities that increase endurance and flexibility. Strength training involves performing a series of movements using a resistance (weight) to build muscle and bone strength. Free weights, exercise machines, elastic resistance bands and your own body weight can all be used to improved your muscular strength.

### **Why Strength Train?**

Regardless of age, gender or fitness status, all adults can benefit from strength training and research shows that beginners often experience the most benefit! Health Canada recommends strength training 2 to 4 days per week.

Adding strength building activities to your *in motion* routine can help to:

- Maintain/increase muscle strength;
- Increase bone density and strength;
- Increase metabolism and energy;
- Improve balance and stability;
- And protect your joints.

Increasing muscle strength also helps us to deal with day-to-day activities, such as lifting a laundry basket, climbing stairs, carrying your groceries or pushing your lawn mower.




### **Getting Started with a Home Exercise Plan!**

A great thing with strength training is that it doesn't have to be overly difficult or time consuming. With a little space, a sturdy chair and an elastic resistance band, beginners can get a fabulous full-body workout right in their home.

We have included a basic strength training routine that you can use to build your muscular strength. To achieve the maximum benefit from each exercise and to avoid injury, be sure to follow the instructions closely. Consult an exercise or health professional if you have questions or concerns. This routine can be performed several times per week, being sure to leave a day of rest between workouts.

- Start with some light jogging, walking on the spot or skipping to get your muscles warmed up and blood flowing.
- Before each exercise engage your core muscles by contracting your abdominal and back muscles.
- Breathe naturally throughout the movement. Don't hold your breath.
- Choose the weight or exercise band that will allow you to do 8 – 15 repetitions comfortably.
- Begin with one set of each exercise. As you build strength and become more comfortable with the exercises, progress to two or three sets of each exercise.
- Rest only 30 to 60 seconds between each set to maximize fitness gains.
- Stretch after strength training to maintain flexibility and help muscles recover quickly.

Making this routine a regular part of your physical activity regimen will give you more energy, more strength and help you stay "in motion" for *life!*

Exercise	Tubing or Banding
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Squats</b> (Thighs &amp; Buttocks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay the banding down flat on the ground.</li> <li>• Stand on the tubing with your feet shoulder width apart.</li> <li>• While keeping your feet flat, grasp the banding between your feet.</li> <li>• Slowly bend at the knees and hips until your knees are at 90 degrees (like you are sitting in a chair).</li> <li>• Keep your chest up.</li> <li>• With your heels on the ground slowly rise back to standing.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Heel Raises</b> (Calves)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand behind a chair or near a wall for balance.</li> <li>• With your feet shoulder width apart and pointing in the same direction, slowly raise up onto the balls of your feet.</li> <li>• Slowly lower yourself back to the ground.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chest Press</b> (Chest &amp; Triceps)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap the banding around your back and under your arms. Be sure to grasp the band with both hands close to your body.</li> <li>• Start with arms out to the side; bend your elbows 90-degrees.</li> <li>• Press forward slowly, contracting your chest muscles.</li> </ul>	

## One-arm Rows

(Upper Back & Biceps)

- Stand in a straddle position or kneel on one knee with the forward foot firmly planted on the banding.
- Grasp the banding with your opposite hand and pull up/back towards your hip.
- Keep your wrist and back straight throughout the movement.
- Change sides and repeat.



## Lateral Raise

(Shoulders)

- Standing or sitting with your feet shoulder width apart on one end of the band.
- Using one hand grasp the band near the other end.
- With a slight bend in your elbow, lift your arm out to the side, away from your body.
- Do not lift higher than your shoulder.
- Do not lean during the movement.
- Change sides and repeat.



## Bicep Curls

(Biceps/forearms)

- Standing or sitting with your feet shoulder width apart, or slightly narrower, on the center of the banding with an end in each hand.
- Standing or sitting up straight with elbows tucked in to your sides, slowly curl your hands up towards your shoulders and then return to starting position.



## Triceps Extension

(Triceps/forearms)

- Take one end of the band in your hand behind your head and grasp the middle of the banding in the small of your back with the other hand.
- Keeping the hand in the small of your back in place, slowly extend your other hand towards the ceiling while keeping your elbow still.
- Change hands and repeat.



## Abdominal Chair Crunches

- Sit upright at the edge of a chair with knees bent, feet flat on the floor.
- With hands on your shoulders or in front of your body, slowly lean back until your back almost touches the chair and then return to the starting position.
- Breathe in as you lean back and out as you sit back up, returning to starting position.
- Keep your head and neck in line with your upper body throughout the movement.



For more additional information and helpful hints on how to add activities that include stretching, strengthening and endurance to your routine, be sure to visit [www.winnipeginmotion.ca/resources](http://www.winnipeginmotion.ca/resources).

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## ***The 411 on Elastic Resistance Bands***

- Resistance tubes and bands were first used in therapy and rehabilitation settings.
- Resistance bands and tubes are versatile, inexpensive, effective and safe tools for strength training.
- Resistance bands offer greater resistance as the band is stretched.
- When choosing a resistance band/tube:
  - Purchase a band that is at least as long as you are tall.
  - Select bands that are suitable for larger and smaller muscle groups. (i.e. you will want more resistance for your legs than you would your arms.)
- Resistance bands are often colour-coded in reference to their level of maximum resistance, which can range from 2 to 20 lbs.