STRONGER BONES LIFESTYLE COMMUNITY · DECEMBER

The Lift Smart, Not Heavy Challenge

Stronger muscles, stronger bones

Your bones aren't taking a break for the holidays. Neither should you. Building muscle is one of the most powerful ways to take control of your bone health, and you can do something for it every single day this month.

Choose your starting point

Choose what's right for you. Stay at your level as long as it feels right, and move up only if and when you're ready.

Ground Floor: Body Weight. Plank, chair squat and single leg balance.

Next Level: Light Weights. Hip hinge and light squat with 1 to 5 lb weights.

Progression: More Strength. Already lifting? Suitcase hold and deeper strength with 5 to 10 lb weights.

How it works

1. **Do something for your strength every day.** Even a minute counts.
2. **Start with the three everyday basics** on the next page. Everyone does these.
3. **At the Next Level or Progression?** Add your weights, with a solid hip hinge.
4. **Tick the box** on your December calendar.
5. **Check in** on the daily post in the community. Tell us what you did.

The three everyday basics

These build strength with your own body weight. No extra time, no extra thought.

1. Single leg balance

Stand on one leg. Work up to 1 or 2 minutes on each side. Let your foot, ankle and leg do the work.

- Hold on if you need to, then hold on less. Tap the chair or wall instead of gripping it.
- Feeling steady? Add layers, one at a time: turn your head side to side and look up. Then close one eye, or both, only if that's right for you. Then add bigger movement: lean forward, tip back, move side to side.

2. Plank

Push away from a countertop, a chair or the floor, with your body in one long line. Start with 20 or 30 seconds and build up to 1 or 2 minutes a day.

3. Chair squat

Sit back toward a chair with your pelvis going back. Your body makes a lightning bolt: head forward, pelvis back, knees right over your feet. Don't let your knees go forward.

Lifting weights?

First, make sure you're hip hinging correctly. Every squat and lift starts here.

1. Stand with your feet hip width apart and soften your knees.
2. Place your hands in the crease at the front of your hips.
3. Push your hips back, as if you're about to sit, and let your chest fold forward. Keep your spine long.
4. Look at the floor a few feet in front of you.
5. Stand up by squeezing your glutes and bringing your hips forward.

> **Feel it in your knees?** Then the movement isn't quite right yet. Send your hips back further and keep your knees over your feet. You should feel it in your glutes and the backs of your legs.

Suitcase hold

Hold a weight in each hand at your sides, like two suitcases. Stand tall, shoulders gently back and down, and hold for 20 to 30 seconds. When it feels steady, walk slowly while you hold.

Adding more, step by step

1 set of 10, then 1 set of 15, then 2 sets of 10, then 2 sets of 15. Then increase your weight or band and start again at 1 set of 10, building up to 2 to 3 sets of 15.

> **Go according to your body.** Check in with yourself the day after you add more. With joint issues, don't do too many reps. For rheumatoid arthritis or certain other kinds of arthritis, 7 reps might be ideal.

The 30-second sit to stand test

Do it on December 1 and again on December 31.

1. Put a sturdy chair against a wall. Sit in the middle, feet flat, arms crossed over your chest.
2. Start a timer. Stand all the way up, then sit all the way down.
3. Count every full stand in 30 seconds. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness or unsteady.

At or above average for women: 60 to 64: 12+ · 65 to 69: 11+ · 70 to 79: 10+ · 80 to 84: 9+ · 85 to 89: 8+. Your number is your starting point, not a grade.

December 1: _____ December 31: _____

My December calendar

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐	6 ☐
7 ☐	8 ☐	9 ☐	10 ☐	11 ☐	12 ☐	13 ☐
14 ☐	15 ☐	16 ☐	17 ☐	18 ☐	19 ☐	20 ☐
21 ☐	22 ☐	23 ☐	24 ☐	25 ☐	26 ☐	27 ☐
28 ☐	29 ☐	30 ☐	31 ☐			

You're not fragile. You're getting stronger.

For education, not medical advice. Stop if you feel sharp or new pain. With a recent fracture or joint replacement, follow your own doctor's or physical therapist's guidance first.