

Senior Sense



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Your Health

Safe Strength Training

(Second in a series about Strength Training)

Strength training can be good or bad for you depending on your physical condition. If you have not been active recently or have a chronic disease such as diabetes or high blood pressure, speak to your doctor before you start. You may need a check-up to be sure you are healthy enough to lift weights.

Definitely see your doctor if you

- Have pain in your chest with physical activity;
- Have been told by your doctor only to do activities that he recommends;
- Have lost your balance before due to dizziness;
- Have lost consciousness in the past;
- Have a bone or joint problem that seems to get worse with activity;
- Are taking a drug for blood pressure or heart disease; or
- Have any medical condition

that is serious, unstable or that has new symptoms.

Yes, you may need to pay for an appointment, but it is much cheaper than the ambulance, emergency room or hospital if you hurt yourself.

Once you have gotten the OK from your doctor, you will want to track your progress. The chart that follows is from the publication, *Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults* available on-line at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/print_friendly_pdf.htm

Record your score for each question in the “start” column and then add all the scores together. Answer the questions again at 3, 6 and 12 months after you start strength training and compare with the previous scores. An increase of a point or two each time from the last time you answered the questions is great. But don’t be surprised if you don’t see much change sometimes. This may happen if you have to stop due to injury or illness. Just get back on track and you will see progress again.

How Fit and Strong Are You Now?

Rarely=1 pt, Sometimes=2 pts,

Usually=3 pts, Always=4 pts

M o n t h s

Activities	Start	3	6	9	12
I find it easy to walk up or down two or more flights of stairs.					
I have no trouble taking out the trash.					
I do house-work such as vacuuming and dusting on my own without difficulty.					
I can easily lift a gallon of milk (8 pounds.)					
I can easily walk a mile.					
I have no trouble reaching into high cupboards or reaching down to pick up something from the floor.					
I do not have trouble doing outdoor work such as mowing, raking leaves or gardening.					
Total					

Quick and Delicious Chili

When the cold weather comes, here is an easy recipe that is lower in fat and sodium than most canned chili and it smells wonderful while it cooks. Serve it with some cornbread muffins and a tossed salad and you will feel good all over.

8 ounces very lean ground beef

1 medium onion, chopped

1- 10 ³/₄ ounce can Healthy Request Condensed Tomato Soup®

16 ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed with water for one minute

16 ounces unsalted diced tomatoes

1 tablespoon chili powder (or to taste)

1. Brown ground beef and onion in large non-stick skillet or electric skillet.
2. Add soup, beans, tomatoes and chili powder.
3. Cover and bring to boil. Then reduce to low and simmer 30 minutes. Stirring occasionally.

Makes 8 one-cup servings.

Nutrition Information:

Calories: 93

Carbohydrate: 26 grams

Protein: 14 grams

Fat: 4 grams

Cholesterol: 22 milligrams

Saturated Fat: 2 grams

Sodium: 478 milligrams

Fiber: 6 grams

Mention of a specific brand name does not indicate endorsement by UGA Cooperative Extension.

Your Resources

Tired of receiving unwanted catalogs in the mail?

Catalog companies use many different strategies and techniques to obtain addresses for potential customers. They purchase mailing lists from charities, magazine publishers, catalog companies, and other sources in an attempt to reach the consumers who are most likely to buy from them. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not.

Receiving a catalog can be a win-win situation. You learn about products that might not be available elsewhere, and the catalog company finds a new customer. When you subscribe to a magazine for tropical fish enthusiasts, you will probably start getting catalogs filled with items of interest to anyone with a home aquarium. You may find the perfect gadget—one you never knew existed—that dramatically enhances your enjoyment of the hobby.

On the other hand, receiving a catalog you do not want is a lose-lose situation. You end up with trash that probably ends up in a landfill, and the company wasted a catalog that might have gone to someone more interested in their products. Printing and mailing catalogs is expensive. If you receive a catalog and know you will never order anything from it, the company would prefer not to send you additional catalogs.

For many of the largest catalog companies, there is a quick, easy, and effective way to get off of mailing lists.

For many of the largest catalog companies, there is a quick, easy, and effective way to get off of mailing lists. Catalog Choice is a free service sponsored by the Ecology Center that allows you to decide what catalogs get in your mailbox. Hundreds of catalog companies already participate. You can also stop catalogs that arrive at your home addressed to someone else. In addition to stopping unwanted catalogs, you can request catalogs from participating companies that might be of interest to you.

You will need a computer with Internet access, and for best results, a copy of the offending catalog. Direct your browser to <http://www.catalogchoice.org/>. Once you register as a user, you will be able to search for the specific catalog or browse the list of participating companies. When you find a company that you want to stop sending catalogs to your address, click on “decline.” Then you will be asked for additional information, such as information found on the mailing label (customer number, source or key code) and your reason for stopping the catalog.

How do you stop catalogs from companies that are not listed? If the company that sends the unwanted catalog does not participate in the Catalog Choice program, there is still a way to keep the catalogs from showing up in your mailbox. Simply write the company to let them know that you wish to be removed from their mailing list. If they fail to comply with your request in a reasonable amount

of time (four to six weeks), write them again and send a copy of your letter to the Federal Trade Commission.

Your Relationships

Finding Good In-Home Caregivers

Most senior caregiving is provided by family members. Two situations, however, usually lead to needing to consider hiring caregiving help. The first is when family members are too far away, or whose schedule is too limiting, to provide the needed care. The second is when the caregiving needs are more than a family member can manage.

In either of these situations, hiring a skilled and trustworthy caregiver to come into the home is the usual solution. It can be a big challenge to bring a stranger, as a caregiver, into your home and to build a trusting relationship. Many of us have heard stories about unskilled or unethical caregivers who harmed or took advantage of a vulnerable senior. Hiring an in-home caregiver is a serious decision.

Here are some tips for finding good caregivers for your senior's safety and well-being:

- **Learn about in-home care services.** Determine exactly what kind of care or assistance your senior needs. In-home care generally is categorized into “*skilled care*” (medical care by nurses and

therapists) and “*in-home support services*” (non-medical care including house-cleaning, dressing, and companionship). Look into who does what and how much various services cost. Social workers, physicians, the local area agency on aging, friends, and relatives may refer you to reputable sources of in-home help.

- **Develop a profile of care needs.** Assessing care needs can help you define your senior's care needs and the kinds of help you need with caregiving. It will also help you to determine in-home caregiver duties and skills needed, and to evaluate the job performance of in-home workers. The local area agency on aging may offer in-home assessments or direct you to an agency that does that.
- **Write a basic job description.** Use the profile of your senior's needs and a list of your needs as a caregiver. Clearly state your expectations and the worker's duties and responsibilities.
- **Find out about legal, financial, and tax issues.** In-home caregiving can be expensive. Review your insurance coverage, know your tax responsibilities if you hire someone on your own, and clearly understand what's involved in working with an independent contractor.

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- **Decide whether to hire on your own or through an agency.** Home care agencies usually charge more than privately hired workers because the agency has a wide range of responsibilities for ensuring quality caregiving. Hiring someone privately may reduce your costs considerably, but it will take more time and effort to screen applicants, pay taxes, and supervise the caregiver. You will also need a back-up plan for privately hired workers to cover vacations and other absences.
- **Screen and interview applicants.** A trusting and comfortable relationship among you, the senior, and the in-home worker can determine the success of in-home services. Take the time to select carefully. Interview all qualified applicants in person even if you are hiring a caregiver from an agency. Write your interview questions in advance. Be prepared to discuss all aspects of the in-home care you need.
- **Check references and backgrounds.** Try to get three or more references, including at least one professional reference. Ask the references how they know the prospective caregiver and for how long. If you are not using an agency, conduct a criminal background check. In Georgia, contact the

Caregivers are employees, but they are almost family members too, making this relationship very sensitive.

Georgia Crime Information Center at 404/244-0748
<http://www.ganet.org/gbi/crimhist.html>
 or a local law enforcement agency.

- **Sign an agreement.** Complete an agreement clarifying conditions and terms of employment and setting guidelines for the caregiver to follow at all times. Both parties should have a signed copy of the agreement. Consider

contacting an attorney to write your agreement. An agreement can be revised or updated as needed.

Finding the right person to be an in-home

caregiver for your senior can be time-consuming and frustrating.

Misunderstandings can develop for various reasons, despite your best efforts.

Caregivers are employees, but they are almost family members too, making this relationship very sensitive. Some people compare the process to finding a good in-home caregiver for a child. In both situations, you're putting your trust in someone to provide quality care for a vulnerable family member. Careful preparation, communication and ongoing monitoring of the caregiving process can help minimize problems.

Adapted from Pacific Northwest Extension (2002), "Hiring and working successfully with income care providers."



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Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Cooperative Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians.

Please contact your local Cooperative Extension office for more information on these and related topics.

Learning *for* **Life**

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