



# Fighting Fit

*Fitness Gym and Martial Arts Academy*

## Women And Weights - The Benefits Of Resistance Training For Women

The majority of men are aware of the "benefits" of resistance training, or training with weights - if they want bigger muscles to impress the ladies on the beach, they need to lift weights! The majority of women however, are unaware of the benefits that a resistance training programme can provide for them. "I want to tone up, not end up like a professional bodybuilder!" is a common response when a weights programme is suggested to them, "so why do I need to lift weights?".

Unfortunately, such misconceptions are the rule rather than the exception amongst most female gym users. But it just so happens they couldn't be further from the truth. The idea that weight lifting will result in a bodybuilder-type physique comes from the few professional bodybuilders that exist, the mountain of muscle mass they display, and the fact that it was the use of weights that got them there. That's an easy connection to make. But let's clear up one or two things with a couple of rock-hard FACTS before we move on any further:

The development of a bodybuilder-style physique is the result of years and years of dedicated training, specific nutrition and advanced supplementation. It is a very, very difficult thing to do and is far beyond the vast majority of ordinary people's abilities, hence the small but elite number of professional bodybuilders that exist. And it most certainly doesn't result from a 3-day per week resistance training regime at the gym!

To build significant amounts of muscle mass on par with bodybuilders and strongmen, a very specific method of training, using very heavy weights within specific repetition ranges, must be engaged in for an extended period of time. To make matters worse, this in itself is often not enough, and advanced training methods such as drop sets, rest-pause and pre-exhaust techniques must be used to break through sticking points and plateaus.

99% of the human population (both men and woman) do not have the genetic ability to develop significant amounts of excess muscle mass. Muscle mass is active tissue (i.e. it requires energy and calories to sustain it and keep it alive), and from a survival point of view, uses up valuable energy that could otherwise be used for essential bodily functions such as breathing and digestion. Therefore, to develop muscle mass beyond the minimum necessary to perform everyday functions is a difficult task as the body naturally resists the process. Everyone can get stronger and build more muscle, but only up to a point beyond naturally determined levels. To go any further becomes very hard work, and is largely dependent on genetic make-up.

Men find it easier to put on muscle mass than women do, due to the fact that men naturally produce more of the hormone testosterone. However, even then most blokes find it incredibly difficult to put on any serious size. Women naturally have a low level of testosterone, making it



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even more difficult for them to put on even small amounts of muscle. Although weight training will help you build muscle, 9/10 woman couldn't develop large muscles if their lives depended on it. As such, female bodybuilders, out of necessity, have use special testosterone-inducing supplements and male-based hormonal drugs, as without these, their muscle building efforts would all be in vain.

Muscle mass naturally deteriorates with age, which can develop into a problem in later life. Our independence in later life is based on our ability to be self-sufficient, and it is the strength to carry out everyday tasks that facilitates this. Rather being worried that a weights programme will put on too much muscle, most woman should be concerned with losing muscle mass if they refuse to weight train.

Hopefully that lot will have helped rewire any misconceptions you may have held about becoming muscle-bound from a weights programme [sorry if it killed any bodybuilding aspirations too. Make no mistake, the objective of a resistance training programme is to build muscle, just not bodybuilder muscles, which is a distinction that needs to be made. So what will a resistance training programme actually do for you then?

### The Benefits Of A Resistance Training Programme

Building muscle mass is, as previously indicated, the primary objective of resistance training. There are a number of benefits to this:

1. Probably the number one aspect that will appeal to woman is that building muscle is one of the best ways to remove body fat and keep it off. As previously mentioned, muscle is active tissue i.e. it requires calories just to sustain it, meaning by doing nothing more than carrying extra muscle, you are burning up more calories than someone with less muscle. Because of this, building muscle increases your metabolic rate - this makes fat loss far, far easier as your body is literally converted into a calorie-burning furnace, reducing stored body fat and keeping it off too.
2. Muscle is what gives us our shape. Fat, on the other hand, is formless i.e. it just hangs there, doing nothing. The lean and toned figures you see on popular celebrities are not the result of fatty tissue. They are toned physiques because they contain muscle that gives them that tone. Fat cannot be "toned". It can only be reduced through a proper exercise and nutritional regime, to reveal the toned and shaped muscle developed through resistance training techniques.



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3. Fat mass occupies 5x more space than muscle mass. That is, 5lbs of fat will take up a lot more space than 5lbs of muscle. What this means for the average female is that the more muscle you build (and fat you lose as a result) will actually make you look smaller and enable you to fit into smaller sizes.

Other benefits of resistance training include:

An increase in bone density, which helps to prevent osteoporosis. Osteoporosis affects nearly all women as they age, and resistance training is the only form of physical activity that has been shown to prevent and even reverse this trend.

Improved glucose metabolism, meaning a greater sensitivity to hormones such as insulin, thus improving health.

Increased strength of ligaments and connective tissue, resulting in a tougher, more injury-resistant physique.

In short, resistance training is an extremely beneficial form of exercise on many levels, not merely limited to those motivated by vanity. If you feel you would like an introduction to resistance training, please ask a member of the Fighting Fit staff, who will be more than happy to help. All Gold membership packages include a resistance training programme designed for you by the qualified Fighting Fit staff as well as cardiovascular exercise programme and nutritional advice. If you are interested in joining or upgrading your membership, please visit the Personal Training page on this site or call in and ask a member of staff for more information.