



Muscle-strengthening exercise: More focus needed

[A recently published article highlighted a number of interesting points in regards to muscle-strengthening exercise](#)*. The researchers found that whilst clinical and epidemiological evidence links muscle-strengthening exercise to optimal health and well-being, **over 80% of adults do not report meeting the muscle-strengthening exercise guidelines (≥ 2 times per week)**. They also found, that compared to aerobic physical activity/exercise, muscle-strengthening exercise has **been generally overlooked** in public health approaches for chronic disease prevention.



What is muscle-strengthening exercise?

Muscle-strengthening exercise – sometimes referred to as strength/ weight/ resistance training or exercise – is a voluntary activity that includes the use of weight machines, exercise bands, hand-held weights, or own body weight (such as push-ups or sit-ups). When performed regularly, clinical exercise studies show that muscle-strengthening exercise increases skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance and mass.

[Check out the NZ REPs media release on strength training for more information.](#)

Why are so few adults meeting the guidelines?

Research shows that there are a range of barriers and challenges associated with promotion and delivery of muscle-strengthening exercise. Two key factors relate to **lack of focus** and **behavioural complexity**.

The researchers suggest that "*muscle-strengthening exercise has been a limited focus for public health approaches...*" and "*this lack of focus is likely due to the fact that muscle-strengthening exercise is a complex behaviour with multiple and unique health promotion challenges*". So what can be done to overcome these challenges?

There are some simple ways activity providers, group exercise instructors and trainers can encourage and support more people to meet the guidelines:

Educate

1. Explain the importance of muscle-strengthening exercise for health.
2. Address any entrenched negative social norms like a fear of injury, excessive muscle gain or perceived associations with hyper-masculine settings.
3. Upskill your clients or participants so they have a good understanding of specific terminology (such as sets, repetitions, large-muscle groups).
4. Debunk any beliefs that expensive equipment or access to specialised professionals is required.

Demonstrate

1. Empower your clients/participants by teaching them how to safely perform muscle-strengthening exercise-related activities (squats, lunges, push-ups).
2. Demonstrate both low and high impact options.
3. Keep in mind the overload principle and show your clients or participants how to safely increase intensity and loads over time.
4. Give regular feedback on technique and form.

Integrate

1. Start including more muscle-strengthening exercises into your class or activity.
2. Consider purchasing some equipment (bar bells, resistance bands etc) for added interest and variety.
3. [Make your own weights](#), or provide your clients or participants with instructions on how to make their own.
4. Regularly review your session plans to make sure you have a good variety of both aerobic and muscle-strengthening exercises.

* [Bennie, J.A., Shakespear-Druery, J. & De Cocker, K. Muscle-strengthening Exercise Epidemiology: a New Frontier in Chronic Disease Prevention. Sports Med – Open 6, 40 \(2020\).](#)

[The Live Stronger for Longer project was set up in 2017](#) to help support independence and prevent injuries in older adults. Over the past 3 years, the Sport Canterbury *Community Strength and Balance team* have been supporting local activity providers to become strength and balance accredited and meet the needs of the communities they serve.

[Find out more about the Canterbury Community Strength and Balance initiative](#) and the accreditation process (Sport Canterbury).



Listings have been rolling in for the Greater Christchurch Sport & Recreation Guide! Thank you to everyone who has added their activities (classes, groups and programmes).

If you haven't listed your activities yet, no problem! You can add information at any time. Simple click on the link below and submit your details via the online form.

[**Add your activity to the Sport & Recreation Guide**](#)



[**Education, Training and Development**](#)

The Active Canterbury website is a great place to go to find upcoming education and training opportunities – accessible from the link above. There are a range of other helpful links and resources on the page including promotional ideas, health and safety information, latest research and news.

[Summer Activity Providers Workshop](#)

The focus of this workshop will be on respiratory conditions (such as asthma and COPD), and how to deliver safe, appropriate exercise.

Date: Saturday 28th November 2020.

Time: 12.30 to 4.30pm.

Location: Pioneer Recreation Centre, Christchurch.

Cost: Free! Registrations essential.

There will also be a number of fun practical activities including one on incorporating bands into your classes or groups, easy square-dancing ideas to try, and a session on Hikitia Te Hā – a series of simple te ao Māori breathing exercises that anyone can learn.

[Register online for the Summer Activity Providers Workshop](#). Be quick as places are filling fast and close on **Monday 20th November 2020**.

[Online courses from Exercise as Medicine NZ](#)

Exercise as Medicine NZ (EAM) has online courses for exercise professionals that are accessible and affordable. The courses are designed for providers wanting to upskill around long-term conditions and exercise. Current courses include Joints and Bones, Prostate Cancer and Exercise, Kidney Disease, Parkinson's Pro, Diabetes and Obesity.

Level 1 courses take 3 to 5 hours to complete and 5 to 8 hours for Level 2 courses.

[FitEx Lite Conference from Exercise NZ](#)

FitEX Lite 2020 is both a live in-person event in Auckland (a world-first for post-COVID-19!) plus a virtual event that can be watched online and live.

Date: Saturday 21st November 2020.

Location: AUT North Campus (90 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland).

Cost: Starting from \$95.

[Find out more about the 2020 FitEx Conference](#), including how to register and the speakers. All attendees (live or virtual) can also re-watch any of the six streams for up to 14 days. That's six days of sessions to watch – double a normal FitEX!



A **big thank you** to everyone who completed our Activity Providers Survey recently. Koia kei a koe!

We received over 60 responses and will be using this feedback to select future workshop topics!



COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of offering more **online education and training** options.

[A new Training Videos page has been added to the Active Canterbury website.](#)

The aim is to make Active Canterbury training information more accessible, plus create a library where activity providers can go any time for practical ideas and information. New videos will be added regularly.

The keynote presentation from the 2020 August workshop: **Pelvic Floor Dysfunction - Safe Exercise Options** is available now.



Toi Ako Webinar: Kori tinana

In this kōrero Te Miri will discuss the findings of his Masters research that investigates the traditional Māori beliefs, values and practices of physical activity and their relevance today.

He will touch on the key themes that emerged through a kaupapa Māori analysis of interviews, pūrakau and whakataukī. Hear about what characterises Māori physical activity; the ways in which mātauranga informs the beliefs, values and practices of physical activity for Māori; and how these are relevant for Māori physical activity today.

[Register for this Toi Ako webinar on Kori tinana.](#)



ExerciseNZ is now offering **first aid specifically designed for the Exercise Industry.**

If you have never taken a first aid course, or if your last First Aid Certificate has expired more than three months ago, you need to attend a Full First Aid Course. These courses are provided by FACT Co. and are designed for anyone who needs a first aid certificate specifically designed for exercise professionals and is recognised by REPs for Workplace first aid.

[Visit the Exercise NZ website for upcoming dates and pricing.](#)

Member discounts available.



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We welcome your feedback and comments.