

# Stronger than Sarcopenia



## Ways to Address Sarcopenia

**Sarcopenia** (saar-ko-pee-ni-uh) is the loss of muscle mass and strength associated with age and decreased activity. You may have trouble standing from a chair, twisting the lid off of a jar, carrying groceries, or you may walk more slowly. Immobility is a risk factor in developing sarcopenia. However, you can reduce your risk of developing sarcopenia by keeping your muscles strong.

Sarcopenia matters because when your muscles weaken, you can do less, struggle to do what you once could, and may become unsteady on your feet. Physical inactivity, functional changes associated with aging, hormone changes that affect muscle mass, and changes in the body's ability to absorb protein all contribute to the onset of sarcopenia.



### Exercise

Resistance training and a healthy diet increase strength and energy, improve body composition (like the muscle mass that will help you stay active), and make it possible to do daily activities that are important to your quality of life and independence.

Any exercise will help your overall health. But to reduce your risk for sarcopenia, exercise or activities that make your muscles contract show the most promise for strong muscles. The benefits of exercise, particularly strength and resistance training, include better balance, fewer falls and fractures, and better quality of life. Exercise—like muscle strengthening—increases independence, mental health, and overall confidence and well-being.

Staying active is important at all ages and helps decrease your risk of getting sarcopenia. It is never too late to rebuild your strength. You can begin or restart physical activity at any time to help increase your muscle strength.



### How to Get Started

It can be hard to start a new exercise routine. Here are a few tips that can help!

- Try a **manageable routine** that you think you can do regularly, starting with 1–2 days per week.
- Enlist a **friend or partner** to join you. By having a partner in this effort, you can help each other stay motivated.
- **Work each major muscle group**, including arms, legs, abs, back, and chest. If you are unsure how to do this, the [National Institute on Aging's YouTube page](#) is a great resource on how to get started with these exercises.

- **Resistance training** can be done using bands, weights, or body weight.
- Explore **resources** from [Move Your Way](#), [AARP](#), and the [National Council on Aging](#) to find an exercise program that works best for you.
- Be sure to **discuss exercise with your health care professional** to find the best options to meet your abilities.

## Nutrition



Eating a healthy diet is important in the treatment and management of sarcopenia. There are some foods that help to support muscle strength. Making sure you have enough protein is the most important part of your diet for remaining strong.

Eating a high-protein diet—above the recommended daily allowance—helps build and maintain muscle strength. Eating 1.2 to 1.6 grams of protein for every 2 pounds of body weight daily contributes to the prevention of sarcopenia. For example, someone weighing 150 pounds should consume 90–120 grams of protein a day. Adding 30 grams of protein to each meal is a good way to meet these daily requirements. Eating 20 almonds adds 6 grams of protein, and one chicken breast adds about 40 grams of protein to your daily protein requirements. Learn more about the importance of protein in this [fact sheet](#) from the USDA.

## You and Your Health Care Professional

While there is no medication to cure sarcopenia, some supplements may help. Although more research is needed, protein, amino acids, fish oil, vitamin D, selenium, magnesium, and omega-3 supplements have all shown promising effects to prevent muscle loss—especially in combination with diet and exercise.

If you have questions about nutrition, exercise, or your muscle health, talk with your health care professional. Your health care professional can help you plan for a healthy future for your muscle health and well-being.



## Connect with Us!

To learn more, please visit [womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia](https://www.womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia).



*The “Stronger than Sarcopenia” campaign is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office on Women’s Health under contract HHSP233201500111 to Manhattan Strategy Group. While supported by OASH, the recommendations and opinions in this campaign may not reflect the positions of the agency or its representatives.*