



The Two Biggest Myths About Strength Training and Women

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One of the two biggest myths about strength training and women is that it makes us bulk up. This is an unfortunate misconception because strength training is the secret to burning more calories, losing weight faster, and maintaining weight loss.

Muscle speeds up our metabolism and burns fat. So the more muscle we have, the more calories we burn, even when we're just sitting still. If you lose weight without doing strength-training exercises, you're most likely losing muscle along with fat. With less muscle, you're actually slowing down your metabolism.

Muscle is denser and more compact than fat. So, it takes up less space, and thus so will you (that is, your measurements will be smaller). As you develop muscle you'll notice that your clothes are looser, even if the number on the scale hasn't yet budged.

Female bodybuilders must lift extremely heavy weights to see big gains in muscle size and, in some cases, they take steroids to add more bulk. Neither of those things are part of our sculpting style strength programs. Our routines make our muscles look firm and shapely, not bulky.

The **other** biggest myth about strength training and women is that the weight gain often experienced at the start of a new exercise program is due to muscle gain.

Many women either gain a little weight or don't see any change on the scale for as long as 4-6 weeks after making a significant change in our level of exercise. This is often explained as "gaining muscle while losing fat," but that isn't quite accurate. The extra weight is usually water.

When we start doing more exercise, our body begins storing more fuel in our muscle cells, where it can be used easily and quickly to power our workouts. The process of converting glucose (carbohydrates) into fuel that our muscles actually store and use (glycogen) requires three molecules of water for every molecule of glucose. As our muscles are building up glycogen stores, our body has to retain extra water for this purpose. That's what causes most of the initial weight gain or lack of weight loss. This is a good thing that we shouldn't worry about.

The good news is that, despite what the scale says, we are actually losing fat during this time. The extra water retention will stop once our body has adjusted to its new activity level. At that point, the scale should start moving

down. We'll end up with less fat and stronger muscles that can handle a larger amount of work.

Bottom Line:

Cardio (ex. walking, biking, running) conditions our heart, lungs, and muscles to work stronger and longer. It builds endurance and burns a lot of calories.

Strength Training (ex. dumbbells, bands, machines) builds muscles and also increases endurance. With lean muscles, our body burns fat a lot faster. As a double bonus, when we're stronger and last longer, we get more out of our cardio sessions, thus burning even more calories.

Reference: Prevention.com