

AGESTRONG

MOVE BETTER | LIVE BETTER

THE AGESTRONG STRENGTH GUIDE

Build Strength. Protect Your Independence.
Stay Capable for Life.



Build Functional Strength
for everyday life



Protect Your Independence
now and for the future



Stay Capable for Life
with strength that lasts

“

Strength isn't about how
much you can lift.
It's about how much life
you can keep doing.

”



MARIUS VISSER

BIOKINETICIST & OVER 50 SPECIALIST

WHY STRENGTH MATTERS MORE AS WE GET OLDER

Strength is one of the physical qualities that helps us keep doing the ordinary things that make up an independent life.



We use strength to rise from a chair, climb stairs, lift a suitcase, carry shopping, get up from the floor and steady ourselves when our balance changes.

As we get older, muscle mass, strength and especially the ability to produce force quickly can gradually decline. But ageing does **not** mean that your body loses the ability to adapt.

Appropriate resistance training gives your muscles and nervous system a reason to maintain - and often improve - their capacity.

The goal isn't to train like you did at 25. The goal is to keep giving your body an appropriate reason to stay capable.

MUSCLE IS ABOUT MORE THAN MUSCLE

It is easy to think of strength training as something people do to build bigger muscles. After 50, its value is much broader.

CHAIRS & TOILETS	Enough lower-body strength to sit down and stand up with control.
STAIRS & HILLS	Strength through the hips and legs to lift and support your body.
LIFTING	The capacity to pick up bags, boxes and everyday objects.
CARRYING	Grip, trunk and leg strength working together while you move.
BALANCE RECOVERY	Enough force - produced quickly enough - to help you recover when balance changes.
CONFIDENCE	Physical capacity changes what you are willing to do.

We don't build strength simply to lift heavier weights. We build strength so everyday life requires less of our maximum capacity.

YOUR BODY STILL RESPONDS TO STRENGTH TRAINING



Strength improves because the body adapts to an appropriate challenge. The resistance doesn't have to be extreme - but it does need to be meaningful.

CHALLENGE → RECOVER → ADAPT → BECOME MORE CAPABLE

Challenge: Ask your muscles to do slightly more than they are comfortably used to.

Recover: Give the body enough time, nutrition and sleep to respond.

Adapt: The nervous system becomes more efficient and muscle tissue becomes better prepared for the task.

Progress: As the same task becomes easier, gradually change the resistance, repetitions, range, speed or complexity.

Progress doesn't have to be dramatic. Small increases, repeated consistently, are what make strength training work.

THE STRESS-RECOVERY RESPONSE

WHY RECOVERY IS WHERE ADAPTATION HAPPENS

Exercise is a healthy stress for your body. The way we recover from that stress determines whether we get stronger and healthier – or run down and depleted.

THE STRESS-RECOVERY CYCLE



KEY MESSAGE: You don't get stronger during the workout – you get stronger during recovery.

THE 3 PILLARS OF RECOVERY



FINDING YOUR BALANCE

Think of your week as a balance between stress (exercise and life) and recovery.

TOO MUCH STRESS

Performance drops
Poor recovery
Higher risk of injury
Burnout

SWEET SPOT

Progress
Energy
Resilience
Better health

TOO LITTLE STIMULUS

Poor adaptation
Stagnation
Loss of strength
Lower fitness

RECOVER WELL. ADAPT BETTER. LIVE STRONGER.

Recovery is not a luxury. It is a non-negotiable part of getting stronger, staying healthy and living the life you want.



REMEMBER

Exercise provides the stimulus. Recovery creates the change.
Respect the process. Trust the process. Stay consistent.



This information is for educational purposes only and does not replace professional medical advice.

If you have a medical condition, injuries or concerns, speak with a healthcare professional before starting or changing your exercise program.

HOW HARD SHOULD YOU TRAIN?

One of the most common questions after 50 is: **How heavy should my weights be?**



Rather than choosing a weight only by its number, AgeStrong also looks at how the set **feels**. A simple tool is the Rate of Perceived Exertion - or RPE.

RPE 3-4	LIGHT	Comfortable. Many repetitions still available.
RPE 5-6	MODERATE	Working, but clearly in control.
RPE 7-8	CHALLENGING	Requires genuine effort while technique remains controlled.
RPE 9-10	VERY HARD / MAXIMAL	Little or nothing left. Not necessary for most everyday AgeStrong training.

For many strength sets, a useful target is a level that feels challenging but still allows good control. Safe doesn't mean easy.

RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION

A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR STRENGTH TRAINING AFTER 50



RPE helps you choose the right challenge on any day.
It's how hard the exercise feels, not a test of willpower.

RPE LEVEL	HOW IT FEELS	TALK TEST	REPS IN RESERVE (RIR)	WHAT IT MEANS
1	Very, very easy Minimal effort	Easy to talk	10+	Warm-up, mobility, recovery work
2	Very easy Light effort	Easy to talk	8–10	Build movement, technique, blood flow
3	Easy Comfortable effort	Can talk easily	6–8	Endurance, general conditioning
4	Moderate Starting to feel it	Can talk with ease	4–6	Aerobic base, general fitness
5	Somewhat hard Noticeable effort	Can talk, but more effort	3–4	Steady training zone
6	Hard Challenging but sustainable	Can speak in short sentences	2–3	Strength endurance, longer sets
7	Very hard Hard to keep going	Can speak in few words	1–2	Hypertrophy, working sets
8	Very, very hard Difficult to continue	Can only say a few words	0–1	High intensity, near your limit
9	Extremely hard Almost maximal effort	Hard to speak	0	Use with caution, very demanding
10	Max effort Absolute all-out	Cannot speak	0	Maximal effort, not for everyday use

HOW TO USE RPE IN YOUR STRENGTH TRAINING



1. CHOOSE YOUR TARGET

Most strength training sets for adults over 50 sit around **RPE 6–8**.



2. MATCH THE DAY

Good day? Train closer to **RPE 7–8**.
Tired or stressed? Stay around **RPE 5–6**.



3. LEAVE REPS IN RESERVE

Aim to finish sets with **1–3** good reps still in the tank.
That's smart training.



4. PROGRESS GRADUALLY

Improve over time by adding reps, a little more weight, or slightly higher RPE — **not all at once**.



REMEMBER

- RPE is personal. Use your own body as the guide.
- Focus on good technique and control.
- Quality > Quantity.



TRAIN SMART. TRAIN CONSISTENT. STAY STRONG.

The goal isn't to do the most...
It's to keep getting stronger for life.

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HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

You do not need a complicated formula to begin understanding strength training. Think about four simple variables:

RESISTANCE	How much load are you moving?
REPETITIONS	How many controlled repetitions are you performing?
SETS	How many times are you repeating that group of repetitions?
EFFORT	How challenging does the set feel by the end?

A very light weight can be useful for learning a movement, returning after illness or injury, or building confidence. But if your goal is to build strength, the exercise eventually needs to provide enough challenge to stimulate adaptation.

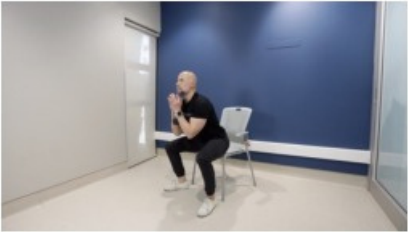
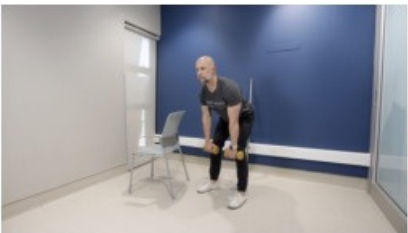
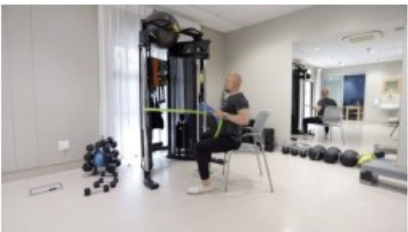
A practical question to ask near the end of a set is:

Could I keep going easily - or am I now having to work while still maintaining good technique?

There is no single perfect number of repetitions for everyone. The right dose depends on your goal, current ability, health, exercise choice and the resistance available.

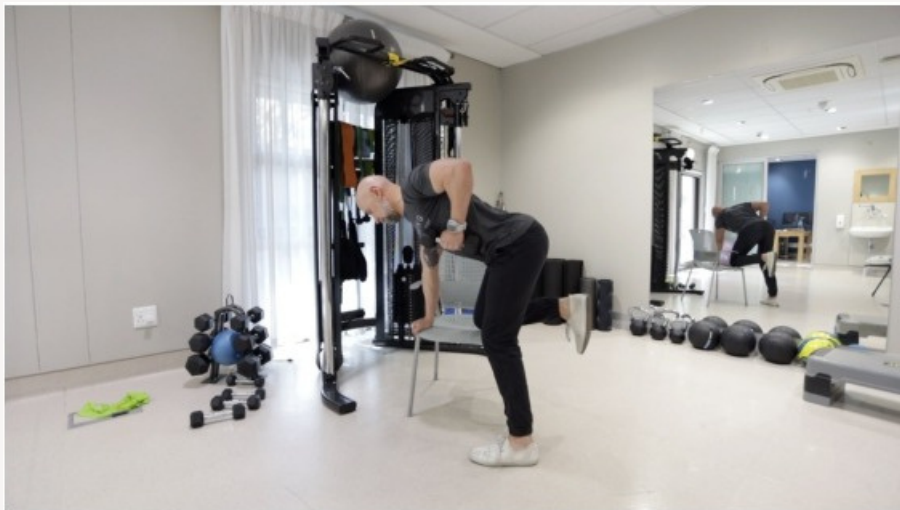
THE AGESTRONG FIVE - YOUR STRENGTH FOUNDATION

Strength becomes more useful when we connect it to the movement patterns that appear throughout everyday life.

	SQUAT Sit, stand, climb and lower your body.
	HINGE Bend and lift while using the hips effectively.
	PUSH Push objects away and support upper-body function.
	PULL Pull objects toward you and strengthen the back and shoulders.
	CARRY Move under load while grip, trunk, hips and legs work together.

These are movement families - not five compulsory exercises. Each can be adapted to where you are now and progressively strengthened over time.

RESTORE → IMPROVE → BUILD YOUR STRENGTH



If a movement is difficult, the answer isn't always to push harder or add more weight. First ask what that movement needs.

RESTORE	Remove a barrier. Improve comfort, mobility, confidence or basic access to the movement.
IMPROVE	Develop the movement itself - technique, control, coordination and efficiency.
BUILD	Once the movement is ready, progressively increase strength and capacity.

You are not Restore, Improve or Build. Your individual movements may be.

STRENGTH IS IMPORTANT. POWER MATTERS TOO.

Strength is your ability to produce force. Power is your ability to produce that force **quickly**.



CONTROL THE LOWERING



STAND WITH INTENT

Everyday life often gives us limited time to use our strength. Rising from a chair, climbing a step or recovering balance can all depend on how quickly you can generate force.

Power training does not have to mean jumping or performing aggressive movements. For many older adults, it can begin with a familiar movement performed with control in one direction and purposeful speed in the other.

CONTROLLED DOWN → STAND WITH INTENT

Speed is only added when the movement is appropriate, comfortable and well controlled.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR GETTING STRONGER AFTER 50

1. START WHERE YOU ARE

Choose a version of the movement you can perform with confidence and control.

2. TRAIN THE MOVEMENT

Build strength through useful movement families rather than chasing isolated numbers.

3. USE ENOUGH RESISTANCE

If strength is the goal, the muscles eventually need a meaningful challenge.

4. PROGRESS GRADUALLY

Add resistance, repetitions, range, speed or complexity in small appropriate steps.

5. RECOVER PROPERLY

Adaptation happens between sessions. Sleep, nutrition and recovery are part of the programme.

SAFE DOESN'T MEAN EASY.

Safety comes from appropriate exercise selection, good movement, suitable resistance, sensible progression and enough recovery - not from making every exercise extremely light.

PRACTISE WITH ME

Strength Training Safely After 50

If you'd like to put these ideas into practice, continue with my free AgeStrong lesson on strength training after 50.



In the lesson we'll look at how to choose an appropriate starting point, how hard your exercises should feel, why progression matters and how to think about strength training without fear or confusion.

WATCH THE FREE LESSON

<https://youtu.be/f48GGz51RSg>

Your goal isn't to prove how strong you are today. It's to give your body a reason to be stronger tomorrow.

STRENGTH IS FREEDOM



The real value of strength isn't measured only by the weight in your hands.

It's measured in the things you can keep doing: carrying your own bags, getting out of a low chair, climbing stairs, lifting something from the floor, travelling, gardening, playing with grandchildren and moving through life with confidence.

Strength gives you options. It creates reserve. It means everyday tasks use a smaller percentage of what you are physically capable of doing.

Strength isn't about how much you can lift. It's about how much life you can keep doing.

YOUR AGESTRONG JOURNEY CONTINUES

The AgeStrong Starter Guide - understand the complete AgeStrong approach.

The AgeStrong Balance Guide - understand and train the balance you actually need.

AgeStrong Foundations - learn how Restore → Improve → Build applies to your movement.

Movement Conversations - continue learning about strength, mobility, balance and healthy ageing.

MOVE BETTER. LIVE BETTER.

Educational note: This guide provides general movement education and is not a diagnosis or substitute for individual medical advice. If you have a medical condition, recent surgery, unexplained symptoms or concerns about exercising safely, seek individual guidance from an appropriate healthcare professional.