

Strength training is often thought of as the lurking ground for the strong and muscular among us. Only a few years ago the free weight area was a breeding ground for modern day Herculean men.

They strutted around and stuck out their chests. They made loud grunting noises and often times slammed down the free weights. The lesser among us, mostly women and average Joe's were left to the cardio area and the group fitness classes.



Fast forward a few years and things have changed immensely. Strength training is now becoming recognized as one of the best methods for weight loss. After all, the more lean muscle someone has, the more calories they will burn per day. Women and men, average Joe's and Jane's are all making their way to the weight area.

The other day I was walking around the gym and noticed one of the members on one of the neck machines. My eyes popped out of their sockets and I stood there in disbelief as he was whipping his head back and forth.

I quickly walked over to him and asked if he would like a few pointers. He stopped the back and forth motion of the neck machine and agreed to listen to some of my suggestions.

I started to explain that neck exercises should be done one to two times per week.

The member also sat attentively as I explained that his form was off slightly. All movements and motions should be done in a slow and controlled manner.

Strength Training for a

STRONG NECK

By: Lynn VanDyke

There are several neck exercises that can be performed in the gym or at home. Typically there is one machine in the gym that pertains to strengthening the neck. The side of the head will rest on a cushioned bar. The exerciser can slowly begin to push the cushioned bar down to his or her shoulder. Obviously this would need to be repeated on the opposite side of the head as well.

Similar exercises can be done at home. One friend can place his or her hand on the left side of another friend's head. The first friend can begin to apply resistance as the second friend slowly pushes their left ear towards their left shoulder. The right side should be done afterwards.

Another option to strength training the neck is to lie face down on a bed. Allow the head to relax off one of the sides. Pick the head up as far as possible before you slowly begin to lower it back to start.

Alternatively, lie face up on the bed. The head should still be relaxed off the side. Slowly lift the head up as far as it is comfortable and then slowly lower back to the start position.

Work at a slow and controlled pace while strength training the neck. It is also important to stretch and warm up as one would with any other exercise program.

Several studies have shown that strength training the neck reduces neck pain in most individuals. It has also been shown to increase neck strength and increase range of motion. The only caveat is to strength train with caution. Always talk with a qualified professional if you are not sure how to perform an exercise.

Lynn VanDyke is an elite personal fitness professional and fitness nutritionist. She is the proud owner of <http://strength-training-woman.com>. She is absolutely dedicated to helping you achieve safe and life long fat loss. Contact Lynn at lvandyke@phillyfitmagazine.com.