



# Food Hero for Older Adults

## Focus on Strength



Muscle loss is a normal part of aging that can be slowed with regular exercise and healthy foods.

Protein foods work with strength-building exercise to slow the muscle loss of aging.

Beans, lentils and split peas are fiber-rich protein foods that go well in chili or stews.

Canned tuna, salmon, shrimp and mackerel are protein foods that store well and are quick to prepare.

Calcium-rich foods, like dairy products, tofu and some leafy greens, support healthy bones and muscles.

**Muscle-strengthening activities** build strength by making your muscles work more than they usually do. They are also called weight training or resistance activities. Examples include:



**Body weight exercises**



**Free weight or weight machine exercises**



**Resistance band exercises**



**Daily activities**

### Benefits of Muscle-strengthening Activities

- Make your everyday tasks easier with strong muscles and joints.
- Reduce your risk of falls and injury with better balance and coordination.
- Strengthen your bones and reduce your risk of osteoporosis.
- Improve your sleep, mood and confidence.
- Prevent chronic disease or ease your symptoms.

**Strengthen your plate** Try this easy and flexible meal idea:

1 cup **cooked meat, beans, eggs or tofu** + 1 cup bite-sized **cooked vegetables** + 1 cup **cooked whole grains**

Mix together and divide between 2 bowls. Season to taste and top with salsa, shredded cheese or plain yogurt.

Go to **FoodHero.org** for easy, tasty recipes such as Rice Bowl Southwestern Style



# Classics Stay Strong

Talk to your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your ability to do muscle-strengthening exercises.

Remember to warm up before and cool down after activity.

Stay hydrated while moving your body! Have water nearby during exercise.

Being active with others can be fun, motivating and increase safety.

Make your own free weights with canned goods, water-filled bottles, or bags of rice or sand.

## Examples of Strength Exercises



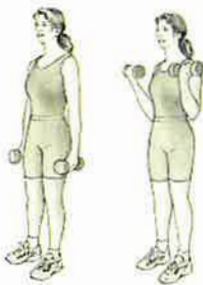
**Bent Forward Fly**



**Standing Calf and Toe Raise**



**Standing Leg Curl**



**Biceps Curl**



**Overhead Press**



**Wide Leg Squat**

Illustrations from The StrongPeople™ Program

### Tips

- Have a chair nearby for balance or to rest if needed. Many exercises can be done seated.
- A repetition (rep) is one completion of an exercise, such as one leg lift.
- A set is a series of reps done one after the next. For example, 6 leg lifts can be one set of leg lifts.
- Start with 2 sets of 6 reps of each exercise. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds between each set.
- As an exercise becomes easier, you can gradually add reps, sets or weight to make your muscles work more.
- Include exercises for all muscle groups: the legs, hips, back, chest, abdomen, shoulders and arms.

### Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults 65+

- Sit less and move more!
- At least **150 minutes a week** of **moderate intensity** activity.
- At least **2 days a week** of activities that **strengthen muscles**.
- Include activities that **improve balance**, such as standing on one foot.