

The Best Strength Training Moves for Seniors

Every client will be different, of course, and these exercises can be adapted to be easier or more challenging, depending on ability and safety concerns. Doing workouts sitting in a sturdy chair or standing with a chair for support is a great way to improve stability and safety. You may use a bench in the gym, but your client can use a chair to do these safely at home.

Chair Squats

Squats, as trainers know, are powerful compound moves that strengthen so many important muscles. Squatting is also an important functional movement. Guide your senior clients to do squats with good form over a chair or bench.

Wall or Chair Push-ups

Another great compound movement is the push-up, but your older clients may not be able to do them. Depending on individual ability level, start with push-ups against a wall, the back of a chair, or against a low bench. You can then progress to knee or full push-ups if possible.

Deadbugs

This is a good stability and core move that anyone can do. To do a deadbug, lie flat on the back on a mat with arms pointing up and legs up with knees bent. Lower the right leg and left arm down to the floor without touching it. Repeat with the other arm and leg. You can make this more challenging by keeping the legs straight.

Biceps Curls and Triceps Extensions

Guide your client through good form with these two basic arm exercises. They can do the moves from a sitting position in a chair or on a bench for stability and safety. Start with no weights to guide form and slowly progress to light weights. You can also work their triceps by doing chair dips, as long as the chair is sturdy enough.

Arm Raises and Rows

These exercises to target the shoulders, chest, and back can also be done safely and easily from a seated position. Again, work on form and add weight only slowly. You can also have your clients do these exercises with resistance bands as opposed to dumbbells.

Hip Bridges

The hip bridge works the hips, glutes, hamstrings, and core. Lying on a mat with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, lift the hips up as high as possible. You can add a challenge to this one by having your clients keep one leg raised at a time.

Progressing

Progression in strength training should be slower for your senior clients. You can adapt exercises your client is comfortable with to make them more challenging, add weights, and slowly add in new, more difficult moves. For instance, when your client has mastered the simple moves above you might want to try lunges, planks, crunches, and exercises with weight machines.

Working with senior clients can be so rewarding for a trainer. You can help an older adult regain function and enjoy a better quality of life. Just remember to be patient and to take progression more slowly than you would with younger clients, and both you and your senior clients will get a lot of benefits from these training sessions.