



Philip Bayliss

St Albans Osteopathy

43 Thames Street, St Albans, Christchurch 8013

Phone: (03) 356 1353 Website: philip-bayliss.com

At-home exercises to boost muscle mass

We all know that ageing causes our bodies to change. Eyesight begins to fail, hair loses pigmentation, and we slowly lose flexibility. From our thirties onwards, there's another profound change taking place: the progressive loss of muscle mass, strength and function, called sarcopenia.

Sarcopenia contributes to a lower quality of life and potentially, in later years, a loss of independence. For most people, the effects of this condition accelerate once we reach 75 years old, although physically inactive adults experience a faster, greater loss of muscle mass than active adults. Sarcopenia may also coexist with obesity, placing obese people at a higher risk of disease and disability. Even if you're not overweight, this condition affects us all to some extent – and it's one major reason why our metabolism seems to slow down. But there are ways to slow the onset of sarcopenia and its effects.

How to beat it

While sarcopenia is caused by a number of factors, physical activity in the form of resistance training is one of the best ways to prevent and treat the condition. Research shows that a progressive resistance-training programme can increase muscle size by up to 9%, boost strength by 100% and substantially improve functional performance (such as stair-climbing ability) in the frail elderly. Aerobic activity such as walking, cycling or jogging, on the other hand, has a negligible effect on increasing muscle mass and strength.

Training tips

Maintain and build muscle mass with this resistance-training programme.

Exercises: 8-10 different exercises targeting all the major muscle groups.

Repetitions: 8-12 repetitions (reps) each exercise. When you can do 12 reps, go back to eight but increase resistance by doing the exercise more slowly, and build up the number of reps again.

Sets: 1-3 sets for each exercise. Allow yourself a one-minute rest between sets.

Duration: 45-60 minutes.

Frequency: 2-3 times per week, with at least 48 hours between each exercise session.

Overload: To promote growth and function, keep challenging muscles when the exercises become easier. Do this by increasing tension under time (see 'repetitions', above) or increase the number of reps.

Muscle-boosting living room exercises

No equipment required!

These dynamic exercises target the body's major muscle groups. They are great for all ages, so get started now!

1. Squats

Stand with feet hip-width apart, hands by your side. Bending your knees, lower bottom to the ground while raising arms straight in front. Stop when thighs are parallel to the ground and arms level with your shoulders. Push through heels back to the starting position. Complete 8-12 reps.

2. Inner thigh lift

Lie on your left side with your head rested on your outstretched arm, legs straight. Bend right knee and place right foot on ground over and beside left knee. Slowly lift left leg using inner thigh muscle rather than swinging leg up. Lower leg but don't touch the ground. Repeat 8-12 times with each leg.

3. One-legged toe touch

Stand on your left leg. Right leg should be bent up behind. Bend your left knee slightly as you lean forward to touch your left toes with your right hand, then lift yourself back up. Repeat 8-12 times before swapping sides.

4. Push-ups

Start on your hands and knees with hands slightly wider than shoulder-width

apart. Slowly lower your torso to the ground, stopping when your elbows are at 90 degrees. Push back up to the starting position. Repeat 8-12 times.

5. **Arm-leg raises**

On hands and knees, lift right arm and left leg in line with your back. Lower to the ground and swap sides. Do 8-12 reps on each side.

6. **Tricep dips**

Place hands on a sturdy chair seat behind you. Keep heels flat on the floor, your bottom hanging above the chair. Bend elbows and lower yourself towards the ground. Stop when shoulders are level with your elbows. Raise yourself up and repeat 8-12 times.

7. **Toe crunch**

Lie on your back with legs raised at a right angle to the floor. Extend your arms up over your chest. Without moving your legs, lift your chest and shoulders off the floor and try to touch your feet with your hands. Repeat 8-12 times.

8. **Knee drives**

Place feet on the ground and hands on a sturdy chair seat in front of you with your spine straight in a push-up position. With arms straight, draw your belly button into your spine and raise one knee towards your chest. Repeat 8-12 times with each leg.