**Why weight train?**

Weight training builds and maintains muscle mass. Muscle mass increases metabolism burns more calories. Weight training can aid in weight management, but even if weight management is not a priority, weight training has numerous other health benefits.

Strengthening lower-back muscles means less pain and discomfort from the stiffness brought about by a sedentary lifestyle. Strength training eases arthritis and reduces blood pressure. Also, weight training improves bone mineral density. A bone thinning condition called osteoporosis is a leading cause of morbidity in women.

**Basic Principles**

Muscles strengthen when forced to operate beyond customary intensity. In other words, overloading muscles builds strength. For maximum strength building, the load should be 85% - 100% of the one repetition maximum.

Overload is achieved by increasing:
- Resistance—lifting heavier weights
- Repetitions by a single muscle group
- Sets—a group of repetitions
- Intensity—such as reducing rest periods

Beginners would be wise to seek the advice and service of personal trainers. Trainers teach proper form as well as can provide a tailored exercise program for clients.

**Breathing**—Use proper breathing techniques to avoid unnecessarily increases in blood pressure. To properly breathe, exhale during raising portion of lift and inhale during lowering portion of lift—“blow the weight up.”

**Keep back straight**—Keep the back upright to avoid back injuries. When sitting or lying on an exercise apparatus with a backrest, make sure your back is held tightly against it. If standing, use light enough weights to avoid bending at the back.

**Muscle Isolation**—To achieve an effective lift, isolate the muscle. This is accomplished by supporting or resting the muscle on an immovable object. For example, if performing arm curls to work the biceps, rest the arm on the leg.

**Rest Periods**—Proper rest between sets is important to regain energy. One minute is ample enough to accomplish regeneration. If you are working out with a partner, one minute would be the time it would take your partner to complete a full set.

**Proper Technique**—Follow the instructions for proper technique and form for every exercise. Proper form ensures the training is more effective and can help with avoiding injuries.

**Consistency**—Work out on a consistent basis. A minimum of twice a week (for 30-minutes) on all muscle groups. Once a week workouts are worse than not working out at all.

**Overload**—Overload is simply working your muscles at a level that they are not normally accustomed to. You will find that the level of overload will change as you progress in your program.

**Safety Suggestions**

To avoid injury when weight training, you should:
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Keep the weight training area clean and free of debris
- Stay well-hydrated while lifting.
- Get adequate rest.
- Eat sensibly.
- Stretch after warming up and before lifting.
- Always use a spotter when doing bench presses and squats with free weights.
- Lift with a partner, whenever possible.