

Strength Training with a Limited Budget

As we watch television, read the newspaper, and walk through department stores we are constantly bombarded with advertisements displaying some new piece of expensive exercise equipment. With increasing monthly fees for gym memberships and hundreds to thousands of dollars for treadmills, weights, or home gyms getting in shape can be quite expensive. The cost for exercise equipment can be discouraging to the beginning fitness enthusiast or those not able or willing to spend large sums of money. You can save money by checking garage sales, classified ads, and stores that sell used exercise equipment. There are some simple ways to perform light strength training at home with everyday objects around the house can be used for resistance.

After all, ten pounds is ten pounds regardless of whether it is a fancy dumbbell or a can filled with sand. Take a look around your house and be creative. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Cans of soup: Cans of soup or vegetables are great to increase resistance. These cans come in various sizes and weights and make great dumbbells.
- Empty milk jugs or water bottles: Filling empty milk jugs or bottles with water or sand are excellent weights. The weight of the bottle can be adjusted by filling it up completely or only a little bit. It's like having a whole set of weights right at home!!!
- Old gym bags: Fill an old gym bag or computer bag with sand or some books and do arm curls. Hold a bag in each hand and do forward lunges.
- PVC pipe: PVC pipe is excellent because it is cheap, comes in different sizes, and can be cut to a specific length. Fill PVC pipe with sand and cap the ends off with some duct tape and you have the perfect weight for many exercises such as a front shoulder raise or bent over row.
- Socks: Fill old socks with sand. Throw them over your shoulder and perform squats safely and effectively.
- Old balls: Make a small cut in old or flat basketballs, footballs, or tennis balls and fill them with sand. Close the balls up with some duct tape now you have medicine balls which are great for functional resistance training.
- Body weight: One of the best tools for strength training is your body. Push-ups, pull-ups and other body weight exercises are some of the best exercise to get you in shape.
- A friend: Grab a partner and have them resist you. Any exercise can be performed with manual resistance from a friend. You can do a leg curl by lying on your stomach and have a friend resist as you bend your leg.

- Buckets: Fill buckets with rice or sand. Try to dig your hand to the bottom. This is a great way to strengthen your hands and forearms.

Remember when using alternative forms of resistance the same principles and safety measures apply. If you have questions regarding strength training please refer to Strength Training for Children: Can We Do That?

Consult your primary care physician for more serious injuries that do not respond to basic first aid. As an added resource, the staff at Nationwide Children's Sports Medicine is available to diagnose and treat sports-related injuries for youth or adolescent athletes. Services are now available in four locations, to make an appointment, call 614-355-6000.