

Important Facts and Research in under 60 seconds

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## Power Vs Strength In Older Adults

Muscular strength and power are often used interchangeably but there is an important distinction between the two.



For maintaining functional ability—and potentially even for living longer—growing research supports the benefits of power training, particularly as we age. Power is the ability to move weight with speed and to generate force and velocity with coordinated movement.

Some studies even suggest that peak muscle power is actually a better determinant of functional status and independence in older populations. Physiologically this loss is due to reduced muscle mass, quality, composition, individual muscle fiber contractile properties (loss of number and size of fast type II muscle fibers) and changes in neuromuscular functioning.

Recent studies have illuminated a surprising trend - the rate of decline in muscle power outpaces that of muscle strength in older adults. What's even more fascinating is that in daily activities like standing up from a chair, the ability to move quickly (highlighting muscle power) often plays a more critical role than the capacity to generate brute force.

The implication is clear: it's essential to prioritize muscle power in the training and rehabilitation of older adults, rather than solely focusing on strength. It's about more than just raw strength; it's about using that strength efficiently and swiftly in real-world scenarios. Furthermore, the effects of power training appear to surpass those of traditional strength and endurance training in terms of overall physical function.

Check out our weekly podcast hosted by Brian Harmon, PT, MBA and Jo Alch, RN with Joy Care Management.



A show on all things Senior Care with important topics and guests to help improve the health and quality of life of seniors.

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