

Script – Broadcast – It’s never too late to build muscle mass

INTRO

It’s no secret that our muscles weaken as we get older.

According to Faheem Ahmad, MD, a family practice physician with OSF HealthCare, who completed a fellowship in sports medicine, we start to see a decline in muscle mass in our mid-40s, but it can happen as early as our 30s.

Dr. Faheem Ahmad, a family practice physician with OSF HealthCare, says studies have shown that when people get into their 70s, they have lost about 50% of their skeletal muscle mass from their 30s.

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There are several reasons. Inflammation increases, which can contribute to muscle loss. People tend to gain more fatty tissue than muscle mass. Another factor could be a lack of protein and vitamin D. Chronic diseases also affect health and strength. Finally, many people tend to become less active as they age and that’s when muscles lose their strength and mass.

Sarcopenia is a musculoskeletal disease that impacts muscle mass, strength and performance as we age. Sarcopenia mostly affects elderly and sedentary people who have issues with their musculoskeletal system that impact their physical activity.

Dr. Ahmad says when you lose muscle, you can lose balance, strength and coordination. Metabolism is also dependent on muscles to regulate blood sugar levels and maintain a healthy body weight. Early signs of sarcopenia include feeling weak, a visible loss of muscle and struggling to be physically active because of tired muscles.

Dr. Ahmad adds regardless of your age, it’s never too late to get to work on building muscle mass. That starts with exercise. He says a target goal should be 30 minutes a day of aerobic exercise like walking or swimming and resistance training (weightlifting). Intensity is key.

((SOS))

Dr. Faheem (FA-HEAM) Ahmad, family practice physician, OSF HealthCare

“I have learned through my training that you should be exercising to the point where you cannot take a deep breath, or you cannot sing while exercising. That should be one of the ways you can gauge yourself. If you exert yourself to that point, and you do it for at least 150 minutes a week, then you're meeting the goal.” (:18)

TAG

When it comes to eating, remember to include lean protein in your diet, such as poultry, fish, lean meats, eggs and dairy products. Dr. Ahmad also recommends protein shakes to replenish the protein and amino acids needed for muscle mass. And drink plenty of water, which gives your muscles nutrients.

Talk to your provider before starting any exercise program. If you need help getting started, Dr. Ahmad recommends joining a gym or hiring a trainer to teach you proper technique.