

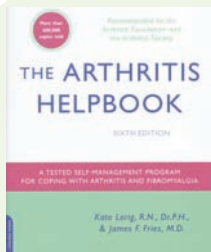


Help Yourself

Get the book that has provided self-management tools to thousands of people with arthritis and fibromyalgia. *The Arthritis Helpbook* is the cornerstone of the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program and has been proven to help reduce pain, increase mobility and help people with arthritis take control of their lives.

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your Self [FITNESS]

Build Strength with Elastic Bands

Just as effective as weight machines, but more gentle on the joints – perfect for beginners!

INTIMIDATED BY WEIGHT MACHINES? Uncomfortable going to the gym? If so, you can still keep fit at home. For women older than 50 who want to start a strength training program, elastic bands can be just as effective for improving fitness.

Researchers monitored 45 healthy but sedentary post-menopausal women who hadn't done resistance, or strength, training or aerobic exercises in the past four years. Participants were divided into two groups. One group performed three sets each of six light resistance exercises for 45 minutes twice a week for 10 weeks using light resistance bands. Another group did the same routine with comparable moves and resistance levels using weight machines. For both groups, the level of resistance or weight used was tailored to individual ability.

Results showed both methods equally effective in increasing muscle mass, endurance and strength.

By the end of the study, participants with osteoarthritis reported less pain and improved function. They were able to more easily bend down, enabling them to do gardening, pick up groceries and walk up steps with less pain and joint stress.

"This is attributed to muscle strengthening," explains study co-author N. Travis Triplett, PhD, associate professor and graduation program director in the Department of Health, Leisure and Exercise Science at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.

Elastic bands, in several thicknesses and lengths, are gaining in popularity and have considerable advantages over machines. They are affordable, portable and storable.

Bands are best for those with relatively low strength or who can handle gentle exertion. Triplett says people who "outgrow" resistance bands should move on to weight machines.

- E.F



Elastic bands - a great way to get stronger without stressing joints

If you're just starting out, Triplett suggests doing 4 to 8 repetitions to improve your strength. As you move up to 8 to 12 repetitions, you'll develop lean muscle tissue. To improve the endurance level of your muscles, increase to 12 to 15 repetitions per exercise.



Go online to buy an Arthritis Foundation-branded Thera-Band (\$7.95). Thera-Bands provide gentle resistance during exercise, allowing you to strengthen muscles without joint strain. Exercises using the bands are demonstrated in the Take Control with Exercise DVD and Video (\$17.95 each). Visit the store at www.arthritis.org.