



## Practical Health Tips

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### ◆ Strength Training: How much is enough?

The ideal number of sets and repetitions is a continuous debate in the fitness industry. Most people do between 10-15 repetitions and between 1-3 sets of each exercise. However, the bottom line in determining “how many?” is to base your decision on your goals.

If your goal is to build sheer strength, then you want to follow the philosophy of heavy weight and low repetitions (around 8-10). If your goal is to build endurance or to simply tone your muscles, then you want to use lighter weight and higher repetitions (around 12-15).

No matter what your goal—strength or endurance—you still want to lift resistance (free weights, balls, bands, soup cans, etc.) that is heavy enough to exhaust you at the end of the set. So, while you may be able to curl 7.5 pounds and feel exhaustion in 8 repetitions, you may only be able to lift 5 pounds if you are doing 15 repetitions.

Unless you have time constraints, a good rule of thumb is to start with 1 set of each exercise and build to 2 or 3. Also be sure to rest in between sets to give the muscles time to “bounce back”. Rest for at least 30 seconds to one minute in between sets when using lighter weight and high repetitions, and with heavier weight and low repetitions, rest for no less than 1 to 2 minutes in between sets.

During this time, have a drink of water and stretch the muscle.

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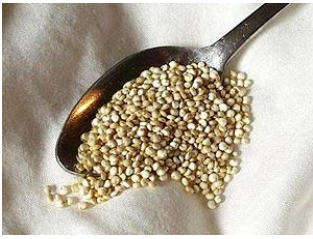
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## ◆The Mother of All Grains



As a pescatarian I'm always looking for new and interesting ways to add protein to my diet, and in the past 6 months I've been enjoying the flavor and benefits of quinoa (pronounced KEEN-WAH). Native to the Andean region of South America, quinoa means "mother grain" in the Inca language.

Not only high in protein, it supplies complete protein that includes all nine essential amino acids. Commonly considered a grain, quinoa is actually a relative of leafy green vegetables like spinach, and offers other health-building nutrients like manganese, magnesium, iron, copper and phosphorus. It's a good source of dietary fiber, and since it's low in gluten content, it's also one of the least allergenic grains available.

You can find quinoa in bulk or packaged containers at your local supermarket or natural foods store. When cooked, quinoa expands to several times its original size, so plan accordingly for your quantity needs when purchasing and preparing it. Store it in an airtight container, and if you're keeping it for more than 60 days, store it in the refrigerator to maintain freshness.

Before cooking you'll need to rinse it thoroughly with cold water then cook the quinoa (one part grain, two parts water) as you would rice. Preparation time is about 15 minutes. When cooked, quinoa grains become translucent and the "germ" is visible as a "tiny curl".

Enjoy it hot or cold, with vegetables, in soups, salads and chili. Add fresh or dried fruit, seeds and nuts and you have a quick, nutritious breakfast. Lastly, quinoa may also be germinated in its raw form and eaten as sprouts. For details on preparation and recipes, visit [www.whfoods.org](http://www.whfoods.org).

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## ◆3 Ways to Increase Results, Not Time

It's as easy as 1-2-3 to challenge yourself without adding more time to your workout:

### 1. Speed Up.

Aim for a "slightly breathless" cardio workout. Research from the University of Alberta, Canada states that women who walk at a moderate pace are able to expand their aerobic capacity to twice that of women who simply amble along more leisurely.

### 2. Turn Around.



Walk backwards for one-to-two minutes of every 5-to-10 minutes you walk and you can strengthen your hips and buttocks without undue knee stress. According to the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, if you head uphill backwards, you'll also burn 20% more calories than if you're facing forward.

### 3. Get Focused.

Consciously challenge yourself every few minutes. Do you have the energy to move faster? Are you breathing heavily while still able to talk? Are you moving your arms while walking? Could you "up" the resistance on your bike or elliptical just one more notch?

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**◆Q&A: Your Questions Answered**

**Q: Is gaining weight just part of getting older?**

**A:** Absolutely not! We lose muscle mass if we begin to live a more sedentary lifestyle as we age, and in turn, the amount of muscle we have is directly linked to the efficiency of our metabolism. So, the most efficient way to keep both muscle mass and metabolism up, while keeping weight down is to live an active lifestyle. This would include cardio activities, strength training, flexibility training and maintaining good balance.

**Q: My trainer gave me breathing instruction for strength training, but it seems opposite to what I would normally do. Can you advise?**

**A:** When doing strength training exercises, exhale on the contraction (the harder phase of the exercise when you're usually lifting, pushing or pulling weight) and inhale on the return. For example, if you're doing a bicep curl, you would exhale as you curl the weight toward your body and inhale as you stretch your arm out. Delivering oxygen to the muscles will give you energy and get rid of waste products more efficiently.

It may take some concentration when you first get started, but it can be especially dangerous if you tend to hold your breath. This may cause your blood pressure to rise and then quickly come down when you release it, sometimes causing dizziness. Focus on proper breathing until the rhythm comes naturally.

**Q: Can I lose my "pot belly" by doing abdominal exercises?**

**A:** Exercising your abdominals will help you tone and firm the abdominal region, but it will not reduce the fat deposits responsible for a pot belly. Sorry, but there's no such thing as spot reduction as fat is uniformly reduced throughout the body. Reducing abdominal fat will come from burning more calories than you take in.

**Have a question? Email [judy@fitafter50.com](mailto:judy@fitafter50.com) now.**

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