

SIMPLE STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SENIORS

BY

EldersStrength.com



1. DISCLAIMER

2. No advice

- 2.1 This document contains general medical information.
- 2.2 The medical information is not advice and should not be treated as such.

3. No warranties

- 3.1 The medical information on this document is provided without any representations or warranties, express or implied.
- 3.2 Without limiting the scope of Section 3.1, we do not warrant or represent that the medical information on this document:
 - (a) will be constantly available, or available at all; or
 - (b) is true, accurate, complete, current or non-misleading.

4. Medical assistance

- 4.1 You must not rely on the information on this document as an alternative to medical advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.
- 4.2 If you have any specific questions about any medical matter, you should consult your doctor or other professional healthcare provider.
- 4.3 If you think you may be suffering from any medical condition, you should seek immediate medical attention.
- 4.4 You should never delay seeking medical advice, disregard medical advice or discontinue medical treatment because of information on this document.

5. Interactive features

- 5.1 Our website includes interactive features that allow users to communicate with us.
- 5.2 You acknowledge that, because of the limited nature of communication through our website's interactive features, any assistance you may receive using any such features is likely to be incomplete and may even be misleading.
- 5.3 Any assistance you may receive using any our website's interactive features does not constitute specific advice and accordingly should not be relied upon without further independent confirmation.

Limits upon exclusions of liability

- 6.1 Nothing in this disclaimer will:
 - (a) limit or exclude any liability for death or personal injury resulting from negligence;
 - (b) limit or exclude any liability for fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation;
 - (c) limit any liabilities in any way that is not permitted under applicable law; or
 - (d) exclude any liabilities that may not be excluded under applicable law.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Principles of strength training	5
2.1 Safety	5
2.2 Stress-recovery-adaptation cycle	6
2.3 WHAT IS A BEGINNER	7
2.4 TERMINOLOGY.....	8
2.5 What constitutes as strength training.....	9
2.6 Quality over quantity.....	10
2.7 Recovery principles.....	10
3. Movement patterns	12
3.1 Hip hinge.....	12
3.2 Squat.....	13
3.3 Push	14
3.4 Pull.....	16
4. The program	17

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading our simple beginner strength training program for seniors. We are glad you are interested in improving your strength and health. You have made the first important decision for achieving this goal.

Strength training has several important benefits for your health that are especially important for older people. These include improved mobility, strength and overall function of your body, improved metabolism, balance and cognition. Strength training also makes your body tougher by improving bone and muscle density, which will both protect you from fall and accidents. You can read more about the benefits of strength training [here](#).

Strength training is very simple but there is so much misinformation out there that it's almost impossible to find an effective program and get real results. Even though strength training is simple, if certain principles are not adhered to you will get little to no results and in worse case scenario you can get injured.

The program you are reading right now is designed with two things in mind: Simplicity and effectiveness. Simplicity because a simple program is much easier to follow and understand. One of the key things in strength training is forming a routine, a habit out of the workout. This is because strength adaptations happen over a longer period of time. They are by no means instant and to get permanent results you have to be **consistent**. Just like everything else in life worth pursuing. A simple routine is better for forming a habit because it takes the guess work out of the equation. You simply do the prescribed workout.

Simplicity is part of the effectiveness because of this. Other components of an effective beginner's routine require correct selection of exercises to improve whole body strength without muscle imbalances. Our routine includes variations of four movement patterns: a hip hinge, a squat, a push and a pull. We will introduce exercises for these movement patterns that can be performed **at home or at the gym** for your convenience.

A complete beginner to strength training will see improvement with a very simple program and exercise selection. There is no need to complicate things until you are at a certain level of fitness. Our program includes the key element of any successful strength training program: **progression**. Progression in workout difficulty over time is what drives the strength adaptations we are after. This means we will be making the workout just a bit harder each time to keep getting results. Do the same workout every time and you will get the same results. Do a better workout and you will get better results (become stronger). Simple as that.

We would like to end this introduction with a simple **wish** and an **encouragement**. If you do decide to start this program, please make the decision to stick with it completely for the following four weeks and we promise you will love the results. **But only if you stick to it and try your best to improve**. Once again, strength training is simple and extremely good for your health and your ability to function. But it takes a bit of work, dedication and of course a working program.

2. PRINCIPLES OF STRENGTH TRAINING

2.1 SAFETY

Before we get more into strength training, we would like to say few words about safety. Safety should always be before optimal progression when training for health. This goal would be different for young athletes preparing for competitions. Even then safety is extremely important because nothing sets your training back more than injury. But in the case of athletes there is always a certain element of risk involved because to aim is to push the limits.

Since we are training to improve our health, we should do everything in our power to minimize the risk of injury. This includes few key elements which include learning and maintaining correct form during exercises, improving mobility and ensuring sufficient recovery through diet and rest.

This is why it's very important to first try if you can perform the prescribed exercises with full mobility and correct form. We will do our best to describe the correct ways to learn and perform the movements and include links to video tutorials. Unfortunately reading and watching videos is not a very good way to learn movement patterns. The only way to learn movements patterns is by performing them and correcting any errors one at a time.

If you find that the exercises we describe here seem very difficult, painful or downright impossible to perform, it's very important you contact a certified trained that can show you how to perform them correctly or find suitable options for your individual needs.

If you feel like you want to try and fix the form yourself, you can ask someone to take video of you performing the exercises. This should be done straight from the side at chest level, far enough so you will completely fit in the frame.

This has two functions. You can analyze and compare your own performance with the tutorials and you can send the video for others to take a look at. You can ask our help as well, but we can't unfortunately promise we can answer every question.

Mobility should be improved with a simple stretching program you can do every night before bed. Extensive stretching before performing the strength training session is not actually recommended because stretching your connective tissues reduces the ability to produce force and there is some evidence it can even increase the risk of injury. But because seniors generally have reduced elasticity in the connective tissues it's good to do short dynamic stretches to warm up the muscles and tissues. Also performing warm up sets of the exercises helps to activate your muscles and prep them for the coming work set.

2.2 STRESS-RECOVERY-ADAPTATION CYCLE

Before we begin our workout program, we need to take a minute to learn about the principles behind becoming stronger. When we workout, it's not actually the workout that makes you stronger. Workout is just what initiates a process that allows you to become stronger. A successful workout causes a stress on your muscles, also known as an overload situation. An overload situation means the muscle has to do high intensity work near or at its maximum capacity. This overload situation causes damage to the muscle tissue and initiates a set of biological processes to heal the damage.

Enough rest in the form of time, sleep and food allow the body to recover from this stress. When properly recovered from an overload situation your muscles will adapt by growing just a little bit stronger. They can be then exposed to just little bit harder exercise to induce another overload situation. You then recover from that and once again adapt to become a bit stronger. This simple pattern can be continued almost indefinitely. **This is known as progressive overload.**

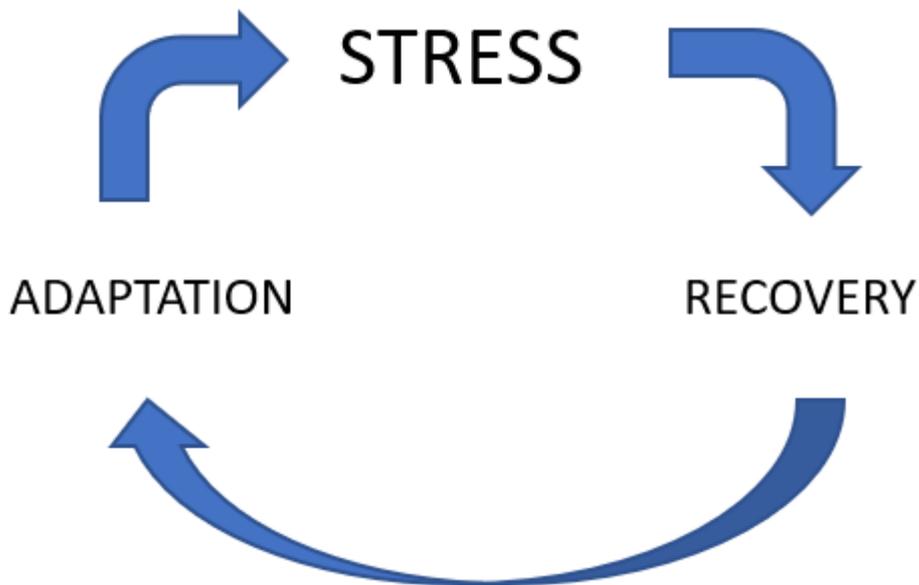


FIGURE 1 STRESS-RECOVERY-ADAPTATION CYCLE

A beginner can adapt very fast to these overload situations, even as a senior. This means we can do a more demanding workout every single time for several weeks. Once you hit a certain level of strength you will get diminishing results from this kind of simple programming and will eventually hit a wall. But some people can keep adding weight or reps for a year and become much stronger with a simple linear program.

Once you reach this level, there is no necessity to continue progressive training from a health perspective and you can focus on just maintaining strength, which is much easier than improving it. However, if you get hooked and want to continue it's time to switch to a more advanced programming that aims to cause the stress and adaptation over several workouts. But that's beyond the scope of our beginners' program.

2.3 WHAT IS A BEGINNER

Since this is a beginner program it's good to understand what constitutes a beginner in strength training terms.

Typically, in strength training programs a beginner is a trainee that has not done enough effective strength training to acquire intermediate level strength. In actual training for sports like power lifting and Olympic weightlifting, there are standards relative to your bodyweight, you have to be able to perform to be considered an intermediate trainee. These are naturally different for men and women, due to biological reasons. Another way to look at who is a beginner is by looking at the way they react to a training program. A trainee that can progress in a linear fashion, increasing workloads each workout, is a beginner.

For a health-oriented beginners' program, intended for seniors, the goal standard for beginner should be set with relatively high safety margins, but the same basic principles apply. **As long as you can progress with a linear beginner's program, you are a beginner by definition.** There is some individual variation at how far you can train with a beginner's program and your age will affect this threshold, so we have to take this into account.

That's why we will start very light with our beginner workout and we will keep increasing the amount of work, or workload each workout for four weeks. After four weeks you can estimate if you can keep progressing and continue the workout.

The most important thing to understand with strength training is that your prior physical fitness training doesn't necessarily (or even likely) mean you are not a beginner in strength training terms. Even if you have been running, doing yoga, cycling or any form of exercise for years (or decades), you can still be a rank novice beginner with strength training.

2.4 TERMINOLOGY

Before we discuss the principles of our planned workout we need to look at some terminology to form a common language.

Terminology

Strength	The amount of force you can produce to move an external resistance. I.e. how much you can lift.
Resistance/load	An external form of resistance we use our muscles to move to improve strength. This can be your own bodyweight, barbells, gym machines, kettlebells, bands etc.
Strength training	Following a planned program that aims to improve strength with proven methods and principles like progressive overload.
Rep	Repetition. A single repetition of the exercise you are performing.
Set	A set of repetitions of an exercise. Typically, in strength training programs the exercises are prescribed in <i>Sets times Repetitions</i> fashion. E.g. "Squat 3 x 8", meaning you perform three sets of squats with eight repetitions. You rest between the sets.
Work set	The actual workout set of the day on the program. In our previous example the 3 x 8 squats mean the work set. You will typically perform one or more warmup sets before the work sets.
Warmup set	A set of repetitions of an exercise performed at a lower resistance or less repetitions than the actual work set. The function of warmup sets is to ready your body for the work sets and prevent injury. Warmup sets need to be heavy enough to warm you up but light enough to not interfere with your work sets.
Workload	The amount of work you do in a single workout. Usually measured in lbs or kg for simplicity, even though they are not the actual variable of work in physics terms. Workload is the total of you of your work sets = Sets x Reps x Load. For example on squats: 3 x 8 x 100lbs = 2 400lbs. We increase strength over time by increasing workload. This can be achieved by manipulating any of the three variables: Sets, reps or load. Increasing any of these will increase the workload, and thus stress on your muscles. In beginners we aim to increase the load before other variables when possible.
RM	Repetition Maximum. The amount of weight you can absolutely lift for a given amount of repetitions. E.g. 1RM = the absolute maximum weight you can lift

one time. 5RM = the weight you can lift five times. In strength training programming work set loads are often given in percentages of your 1RM. This is because the relative amounts of weight people can lift for different repetitions are fairly standard. For example, your 5 RM is usually around 85 % of your 1 RM. This is more of an advanced term but we will refer to it couple times in the program so it's important to know the concept.

Form

The technique and body positions you use while performing any given exercise. Most exercises can be seemingly performed with poor form but this will not improve your strength, it will only set you up for an injury. It's important to master and use correct form on every exercise. Never add weight on the expense of form.

If this all seems complicated to you, don't get discouraged. When we form all this to a simple workout plan, you will understand better why it's planned the way it is. There is no need to understand everything behind a workout plan, but it's important to have a basic understanding on the principles behind it.

2.5 WHAT CONSTITUTES AS STRENGTH TRAINING

Now that we understand the stress-recovery-adaptation process, progressive overload and strength training terminology, we need to talk a little bit about what kind of exercises actually cause strength adaptations.

Strength adaptations are built from two components. Neural and muscular. When strength adaptations happen, two things take place. Your muscles cells become larger and your nervous system becomes more efficient in recruiting individual muscle cells simultaneously and at correct time.

These effects generally happen optimally between 1 RM and 20 RM. 1 RM work is more effective for improving neurological strength while 20 RM will produce more metabolic stress that increases muscle hypertrophy. These are very simplified guidelines, but they hold true to an extent. When you can perform more than 20 repetitions on an exercise, you start to improve stamina and endurance. Both useful, but not optimal for our strength training program.

Things like running and cycling can make your muscles sore but they won't generally improve your strength. Sure, they will be better for strength than inactivity as there is always some overlap with the repetition ranges and strength improvement. Meaning that even if you perform 1000 repetitions, it will produce some level of strength adaptation compared to doing nothing. But doing 5 repetitions close to your 5 RM with a much higher weight would produce much greater strength adaptations.

2.6 QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Since this is a strength training program that is aimed for improving health before anything else, we need to talk about the importance of quality over quantity.

When we try to improve our strength, it's extremely important we perform the exercise with correct form and in the same way every single time. It's typical to see a beginner with a good form on smaller weights but as the weight go up their form start to deteriorate. Many times, they are not even aware of this themselves.

This is why it's better to err on the side of caution and focus on quality over quantity with strength training. When you perform a set of heavy exercises, you start to fatigue towards the end of the set. The fatigue will hinder your focus and make it harder to maintain proper form.

That's why it's better to two 6 sets 3 quality repetitions than 3 sets of 6 repetitions with less than ideal form. For health purposes it's much more beneficial to be able to perform an exercise with full range of motion and good form with lighter weight that it is to just lift heavy and don't care about your form.

2.7 RECOVERY PRINCIPLES

Like stated before, recovery is where the adaptations to the training stimulus happen. If you just workout but don't take care of recovery, you will not improve your strength. You can actually become weaker or get injured if you neglect recovery. This is why it's important to understand what affects recovery.

Nutrition (food)

The first part of recovery is nutrition. Our bodies are built from amino acids, fats and minerals. We need energy to maintain, regenerate and grow our tissues. When we exercise, our muscles consume energy and they also get damaged. To recover, we need to replenish the energy stores and to have enough energy and nutrients to regenerate and grow the muscles.

The most important dietary component for building muscle mass is sufficient protein. Dietary fat is essential for hormonal function and carbs are the main fuel of our muscle and brain cells. Fat can be used as an energy source instead of carbs, so carbs are the only one of the macronutrients that isn't essential to life.

We are not going to go too deep into diet here, but it's very important to realize that you have to eat enough to recover from strength training. Your diet needs to be diverse, contain enough protein and have enough energy either from fats, carbs or preferably both. Fats are essential for life so you shouldn't limit them too much even if trying to lose fat. Carbohydrates are the preferred source of energy of our cells, so the only time someone should even consider severely limiting their carbohydrate intake, is if they have significantly reduced insulin sensitivity.

Rest

There are two forms of rest when it comes to strength training. Active and passive. For the sake of simplicity, we will count sleeping into passive rest.

Sleep is essential for recovery. Without sleep your hormonal function and metabolism will not function properly. Insomnia and reduced sleep have been associated with type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression and many other ailments. During sleep both our body and our mind are cleaned and replenished. Our body releases growth hormones and testosterone during sleep, which are incredibly important for both health and recovering from training. This is why you should **aim to sleep 8 hours a night**. Many seniors suffer from reduced sleep but fortunately strength training and other forms of exercise can help you sleep longer. Other forms of passive rest are when you are simply sitting or lying without really doing anything active. You should avoid passive rest except for sleep.

Active rest simply means being active like doing chores, walking, cleaning, gardening. Anything really that keeps your heart rate slightly higher and activates your metabolism. This improves circulation and helps your tissues recover faster than simply lying still. The only thing you need to watch out for is being too active to affect your recovery. Things like construction, home improvement and gardening can be surprisingly taxing if done for several hours and you might have to take them into account when planning your workout routine. If your muscles are very sore and you feel fatigued, take one extra day between workouts and remember to eat well.

Recovery and age

Since this routine is meant for seniors, it's important to realize that your age will affect your ability to recover from workouts. Generally speaking, the older you get, the more time it takes for complete recovery and adaptations to happen. Someone in their 60s will generally recover much faster than someone in their 80s. Usually as you get older, you get more sensitive to the amount of volume you can perform in your workouts more than the absolute strength. If you feel like you can't simply recover from the exercises fast enough or they cause excessive fatigue, you can try to reduce the last set from each exercise to reduce overall volume.

Muscle soreness

When you first begin strength training, you will feel muscle soreness. This can be annoying but it's nothing dangerous and it will reduce significantly in about two weeks. Our program is designed to be started light enough, so that you shouldn't get too sore muscles. But if you do, don't get discouraged. The first couple workouts are usually the worst.

Muscle soreness doesn't really tell about the effectiveness of the workout or even if you are recovered, even though this is a common myth. It's caused by a novel stimulus to the muscle and your muscles will adapt to it soon enough. Just follow the program and don't worry if you get or don't get muscle soreness, it's irrelevant.

3. MOVEMENT PATTERNS

For simplicity this novice program is split into four movement patterns that will train your whole body in functional, compound exercises that function over several joints.

3.1 HIP HINGE

Hip hinge and extension is included as a separate movement pattern in this program because it is the core of using your lower body to lift objects from the ground. Any time you pick up something heavy, you should be performing a hip hinge and extension to use the large muscles of the hips and protect the lower back.

It's incredibly common in people of all ages to not be able to perform this simple and important movement pattern, that is also crucial for athletic performance. Natural athletes know how to perform explosive hip extension. Most other people have to learn and ingrain it in muscle memory to use their hips effectively.

Hinging at your hips allows you to activate your gluteal and hamstring muscles, which are the most powerful muscles of your body. If you don't know how to perform this movement pattern, you will usually compensate by hinging at the knees and rounding your back when lifting something heavy. Both very disadvantageous positions biomechanically.

For older people who have never learned to use their hips or have long forgotten, this pattern is very important. Proper hip activation is crucial for simple tasks like walking, climbing a set of stairs and maintaining balance. Without learning to use your hips correctly it's also impossible to perform a deep squat. Squat is a movement pattern every single healthy individual should be able to perform, no matter what your age. We will talk about the squat a bit more in a minute.

https://youtu.be/S5x_7WvxuRM

The hip hinge pattern is very simple once you learn but it will feel awkward at first if you have been doing things differently for decades. There is no better movement to teach the hip hinge than the Romanian deadlift.

<https://youtu.be/0Sd1AZZ77aw>

It involves holding a weight in your hands in front of your hips. You begin to bring the weight down by hinging from your hips. To achieve this, you will keep your weight on your heels and bring your butt back. Your shins will remain vertical and you will feel a stretch on your hamstrings. Your back will remain perfectly neutral. The key points to observe here are your knees and back. If your knees come forward or your back rounds at all, you are not performing the pattern correctly.

3.2 SQUAT

The squat is the most important of our movement patterns. The hip extension is only included as a separate movement pattern in this program because it's necessary for performing a squat with correct form.

The squat is something many seniors can't perform right away and at the beginning of our strength training program the main priority needs to be at learning this pattern. There can be mobility, strength and movement pattern issues that prevent you from performing the squat.

The squat involves the hip hinge movement pattern we talked about in the previous chapter. It's essentially the hip hinge combined with a knee hinge, which allows you to drop your hips below your knees, into a squatting position. Many older people will notice their heels will rise up from the ground when the squat down. This means the hips and hamstrings are not active and the squat is performed completely on the quads while the center of gravity is shifted to the balls of the foot. A proper squat is performed with feet flat on the ground with the center of the gravity on the middle of the foot, with active hips.

The best way to learn this pattern is by first learning the hip hinge pattern by doing Romanian deadlifts. Then you will practice lowering down to a full squat by taking a point of support with your hands. A sturdy table or a rope that is securely connected will do sufficiently. You will then bring your hips back just like in the Romanian deadlift while holding to the support in front of you.

When you reach the full hip hinge position, you will continue to drop your hips down by hinging from your knees. Keep the weight on your heels and hold the support to keep balance (you will otherwise fall on your butt) while learning this pattern to allow you to learn the movement pattern properly. You will find that it's much easier to drop your hips down while keeping hold on to a support.

When you are at the bottom of a squat, you should notice that you can stay in a deep squat with a flat back and the weight on your heels. You should also notice that you have to hold on to the support to keep this position. If you lean just a bit forward and move your balance from your heels to the middle of the foot, while just slightly lifting your hips up, you should be able to let go of the support and maintain a perfect squat position. This is the low position of the squat.

The next phase is to get up from the squat. You should hold on to the support when learning this pattern. You initiate coming up from the squat by simultaneously raising our hips and opening your knees. Your weight will keep on the middle of the foot will performing this. You might find it difficult to stand up from the low squat, especially if you are overweight

<https://youtu.be/7AS3fySL92Y>

<https://youtu.be/lQuDQ3nKMUs>

Holding on to the support helps you ingrain this squat pattern with active hips and neutral back. When you have the pattern learned, you can keep using the support for standing up if you find it otherwise difficult. This is perfectly normal as many people simply have weak hips and legs. Fortunately, your squat strength will improve very fast.

3.3 PUSH

The next movement pattern is for the upper body, the push. Pushing movement patterns use the large muscle of your chest, shoulder and the triceps of the arms. Pushing can be done horizontally, in front of you, or vertically above your head and in varying degrees between these two positions.

In this program we will focus on horizontal pushing, because it utilizes a larger portion of your muscle mass and is more effective for teaching the proper positioning of the shoulder girdle. In pushing movements it's very important to pull your shoulders back and down, pushing your chest forward. This allows your chest muscles to activate correctly. If you don't bring your shoulders back, you will be mostly pushing with the smaller muscles at the front of your shoulders.

To learn the proper pattern, you need to practice bringing your shoulders back. It's easy to do this incorrectly by over extending your back. The best way to practice this by standing with a straight back, bring your shoulders up to your ears, pull them as back as they go and bring the back down keeping them back. You should feel a nice stretch at your pectoral muscles. This is the position your shoulders should be for optimal performance.

Another important thing to watch out for in pushing movements is arm angle. Your upper arms should not point out in a 90-degree angle from your shoulder. Instead you should bring your elbows closer to your sides, so that your arms are at around 45-degree angle. This will protect the shoulders.

So, remember this: **Shoulders back, arms at 45 degrees.**

In our program we will be using the push-up to practice the pushing movements. This is because they don't require any equipment and they can be scaled easier by changing the positioning of your body.

Standing push-up: The easiest variation of the push up is the standing push up or wall push up. You simply stand facing a wall at a distance that allows you to lean at it with straight arms. Keeping your shoulders back and arms at 45 degrees, you will then lean into the wall until your face almost touches the wall. Then you simply push back to the starting position. If you find bent knee or regular push ups too hard, start with standing push-ups. They help to build your strength so you can do eventually regular push-ups.

<https://youtu.be/JJg2Avvd5WY>

Bent knee push up: The bent knee push-up is an easier variation of the regular push up. It's slightly lighter to perform than a regular push-up because of the shorter lever and reduced weight of the legs. You perform the bent knee push up by going on the ground on your knees. You then support your upper body with extended arms just like in a regular push up but you keep your knees on the ground and extend your hips. Focus on keeping your core and hips active to keep your body straight. You then lower your body until your chest touches the ground very lightly and press up. The exercise ends at the starting position. Remember to keep your arms at 45 degrees, closer to your sides rather than spread out.

<https://youtu.be/EgIMk-PZwo0>

Push-up: The regular push-up is performed just like the bent knee push-up but on your toes instead of knees. Performing a push up with correct form requires quite a bit of strength and body control.

ElderStrength.com
SIMPLE STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SENIORS

Remember that you have to touch the ground with your chest on each rep. If you are a senior and beginner to strength training, they are likely too difficult to perform. Some older people with athletic background and light bodyweight can perform them however. If you are one of these people, do them by all means. Our program can accommodate any form of push-ups.

<https://youtu.be/IODxDxX7oi4>

3.4 PULL

Our last movement pattern is the pull. Pulling movements activate the large muscles of your upper back, posterior shoulders and the biceps. They are a counter movement to pushing and you should always perform at least as much pulling movements as you do pushing movements. This is because pulling movements improve your posture by extending your thoracic spine and opening up your chest. A strong back helps keep your shoulders back and prevents you from hunching over.

With pulling movements it's important to keep your arms close to your sides to protect your shoulders. Instead of actively keeping your shoulders back, like in pushing movements, you should focus on keeping your shoulders neutral and prevent them from slouching forward.

Since we are focusing on horizontal pushing with our beginners program, we will be using a horizontal pull as well. Because we want to keep things simple, we will use the same kettlebell or dumbbell we used in our hip hinge movement pattern, doing the Romanian deadlifts.

The pulling exercise we will be performing is the one-armed dumbbell/kettlebell row. You will need a bench and the weight to perform this movement. In a typical beginner's program for younger people we would likely use pull-ups or chin-ups, but these can be very hard for most seniors. If you can perform the with good form, you can substitute the row with them.

The one arm row is performed by resting one arm and leg on a bench while the other leg remains on the ground. The free arm is used to lift the weight of the ground as close to your side as possible. Keep the weight and your arm as close to your side as possible and don't flare your arm out. Your upper body and back should remain flat during the whole movement. The idea is to move the weight with your arm and upper back, not by twisting your torso.

<https://youtu.be/nehAvSrfUOg>

Now that we know the movement patterns and exercises, it's time to look at the program.

4. THE PROGRAM

The program and the progression are very simple. You will be performing the same four exercises in three workouts, every week, for four weeks. Because the aim is to keep our program simple and effective, the variables we will be changing to achieve progressive overload are sets and repetitions. This allows to design the program with minimal need for equipment and makes it possible to perform it at home.

Because two of our exercises require an external resistance, you will preferably need a kettlebell or a dumbbell. A large jug of water or similar heavy object with a handle can be used in a pinch as well. Usually a 18lbs kettlebell is a good starting point for women and a 26lbs for men.

The program is described in the table below. You will perform a Romanian deadlift (RDL), a squat, a push up and a kettlebell row in every workout. There will be three workouts in one week. **There should be at least one day of rest between workouts. I.e. do a workout either every Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday.**

Each workout will have a designated amount of set and repetitions. The **first number is** the number of **sets**. The **second number is** the amount of **repetitions**. In the first workout you will be performing a single set of five repetitions of each movement. In the last workout you will be performing three sets of ten repetitions of each movement.

The first workout should feel pretty light and take around 15 minutes. Do not workout more even if you feel like. **Take a minute or two of rest between sets.** The whole idea is to break your muscle in very slowly to avoid soreness. As you can see, the total amount of repetitions will increase fast. The last workout will last between 30 to 45 minutes and will likely make you sweat quite a bit.

	Exercise	RDL	Squat	Push up	Kettlebell row
Week 1	Workout 1	1x5	1x5	1x5	1x5
	Workout 2	1x6	1x6	1x6	1x6
	Workout 3	1x7	1x7	1x7	1x7
Week 2	Workout 1	2x5	2x5	2x5	2x5
	Workout 2	2x6	2x6	2x6	2x6
	Workout 3	2x7	2x7	2x7	2x7
Week 3	Workout 1	3x5	3x5	3x5	3x5
	Workout 2	3x6	3x6	3x6	3x6
	Workout 3	3x7	3x7	3x7	3x7
Week 4	Workout 1	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8
	Workout 2	3x9	3x9	3x9	3x9
	Workout 3	3x10	3x10	3x10	3x10

TABLE 1 THE PROGRAM

Tips:

1. Choose a push up variation you can perform easily. If you have any doubt, start with the wall push up
2. If bodyweight squats feel too heavy, use supported squats. It's a good idea to do them anyway in the beginning to learn the proper movement pattern. Go only as low as your mobility allows.
3. If the same kettle bell you use for Romanian deadlifts is too heavy for the row, use a lighter dumbbell or a large water bottle.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at jukka@elderstrength.com, by replying to the e-mail you received this with or on the comments section of ElderStrength.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read through my program. I wish luck with your strength training and please, stick with it! It takes couple weeks to form a habit and for the magic to happen. You will thank me in the end, I promise!