

Zack Cleaver - UWTSD

Student ID: 2502510

Sport, Health and Outdoor Education) (BMSH4200/C

Describe how resistance training contributes to healthy ageing?

Resistance training, also referred to as strength training, can significantly enhance quality of life as people age. Whether using weights, resistance bands, or body weight exercises, these activities help maintain muscular strength and energy levels. More importantly, resistance training is not solely about appearance; it supports overall well-being and independence in older adulthood. The World Health Organisation (2020) highlights that regular strength exercises assist older adults in preserving muscle mass, increasing bone density, and improving general well-being. Glatt (2025) further notes that resistance training also reduces the risk of age-related conditions such as osteoporosis, making it a key component of healthy ageing.

One of the best things about resistance training as we get older is that it helps us maintain our strength. Losing muscle is just part of getting older, which can make it harder to stay active and do things on our own. Regular strength training keeps us strong, so everyday tasks feel easier and we stay safer. It also helps our bones. Activities that gently stress our bones make them stronger, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures (WHO, 2020). But it's not just our bodies that benefit—resistance training can lift your spirits and help you feel better overall. Glatt puts it simply: “One of the most effective and evidence-based ways to promote healthy ageing is resistance training,” because it keeps both body and mind in good shape. Hart and Buck (2019) found that older adults who made strength training a habit felt stronger, had more energy, and were happier. So, resistance training is a straightforward way to stay healthy as we grow older.

However, resistance training is not without its challenges, particularly for older adults. Improper technique or attempting to lift excessive weight can increase the risk of injury (Peterson et al., 2010). For this reason, appropriate supervision and guidance are essential to ensure safety and maximize the benefits of training. Additionally, limited access to equipment or exercise facilities, especially due to financial constraints, can be a barrier to participation. Despite these challenges, national guidelines continue to recommend that older adults engage in resistance training on a weekly basis, targeting all major muscle groups (Chodzko-Zajko et al., 2009).

In summary, resistance training plays a vital role in healthy ageing, benefiting both physical and mental health. To make these advantages more widely accessible, it is important to offer affordable, supervised exercise options, particularly for individuals with limited confidence or mobility. Even beginning with resistance bands or basic bodyweight exercises can help build confidence and sustain long-term progress.

In conclusion, resistance training is a valuable strategy for promoting healthy ageing. It supports bone strength, mental well-being, and muscular health. While there are certain obstacles, such as the potential for injury and the cost of equipment, the overall benefits clearly outweigh the drawbacks, making resistance training a recommended approach for older adults.

References:

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