

Strength Training: A Powerful (and Often Underrated) Heart-Protective Habit

Strength training is distinct from cardio-based workouts because of its ability to build and preserve muscle which makes it a powerful tool for reducing diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity—and ultimately protecting heart health over the long term. Adding weight training just 2–3 times per week can significantly lower your risk of heart disease by targeting those key risk factors. See below for strength training tips and how it helps those key factors.

What effective strength training should look like:

- Emphasis on **compound lifts** (squats, presses, rows, deadlifts, lunges)
- **Moderate to heavy loads** performed for 6–12 repetitions
- **Adequate rest between sets** (about 60–120 seconds) to maintain strength output
- **Progressive overload**—gradually increasing weight, reps, or volume over time

Effect on key risk factors:

- **Reduces diabetes risk:** More muscle improves insulin sensitivity, helping your body regulate blood sugar more effectively.
- **Lowers blood pressure:** Strength training improves blood vessel function and reduces arterial stiffness, which can lead to healthier blood pressure levels.
- **Reduces obesity risk:** More lean muscle raises resting metabolic rate, supporting sustainable fat loss and long-term weight maintenance.

Weekly Tip Provided by Grace Rogers, BaySport Exercise Physiologist

Monica Hussey, Health Tip Coeditor

© 2026 BaySport, Inc. All rights reserved.

