

## ***Lamar residents Pump Iron to Improve Health***

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Lifting weights is not just for football players and body builders. Ordinary people can reap the benefits from a simple weight lifting routine that can be completed in less than an hour.

For ten weeks in July, August and September, participants in Stay Strong Stay Healthy showed up on Tuesday evenings at the Lamar First Baptist Church to lift weights. Two sets of 20 repetitions of eight exercises plus a warm-up and cool-down has made a difference for the people who set aside the time to make a difference in their health.

Strength training is great exercise for middle-aged and older adults because it helps build back muscle that is naturally lost as we age. As we lose muscle mass, we lose balance and flexibility along with strength. Before starting the class, each participant completed a series of balance and flexibility tests. At the end of the ten weeks every person that was tested showed improvement in at least one area of balance or flexibility.

It's nice to be able to say that you increased balance, flexibility and strength but participants in this class were happy about other benefits they gained from the class such as weight loss, decrease in joint pain, better mental outlook, ability to lift things more easily and ability to get up and down stairs more easily.

The Stay Strong Stay Healthy program was adapted by University of Missouri Extension from a program originally researched and written by Dr. Miriam Nelson who also wrote the Strong Women Healthy Hearts curriculum which was offered in Lamar earlier this year.

Miriam Nelson is a New York Times best-selling author recognized nationally for her research in nutrition and physical activity. She is currently on an eight-state tour visiting places where Stay Strong Stay Healthy and Strong Women Health Hearts are implemented. She will be visiting Lamar October 19-21.