

## **Stay Strong, Stay Healthy in 2012**

*By Janet Hackert, Nutrition Specialist*

When people talk about being physically active, many think of aerobic activities. But it is also about being strong. I will be offering three *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy* classes to help people learn how to build up their muscular strength.

It's not about becoming body builders. It IS about helping older adults regain the upper and lower body strength they need to maintain independence.

One class will be held at the Gallatin Active Aging Resource Center on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Another class will be held on Wednesdays in Bethany from 5:15-6:15 p.m. The last class will also be in Bethany but on Mondays only – this is an advanced class. All classes start the week of January 9<sup>th</sup> and run for 10 weeks. Please pre-register by contacting me by January 5<sup>th</sup>. Weights will be provided for use during classes. Participants are asked to wear comfortable clothing and shoes, and bring a towel and water.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has set guidelines for older adults for resistance exercise to maximize the benefits. Benefits to strength training can include arthritis relief, improved balance, strengthened bones, weight control, reduced risk of heart disease, and better maintenance of healthy blood sugar levels.

The ACSM also recommends “performing at least one set of repetitions for 8-10 exercises that train the major muscle groups.” Participants in the *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy* class learn to safely do these types of exercises, as well as some stretches. At least one set should be done 2-3 times per week on nonconsecutive days.

The resistance for strength training exercises can be created by using hand weights and ankle weights. Increasing the weight increases the resistance and strengthens the muscles.

With strong muscles, a person may find that the everyday tasks that have become burdensome with age are not as difficult as in the past. A 76 year old participant of the course explained that, “last year the bag of mulch was really heavy, and this year it didn't seem like much at all to lift and carry.” An 80+ year old class member said that, “after doing these exercises even getting up out of a chair was easier!”

If you are interested in joining the class to Stay Strong and Stay Healthy in 2012, or for more information, contact Janet Hackert, at 660-425-6434 or [HackertJ@missouri.edu](mailto:HackertJ@missouri.edu).

*(Written December 16, 2011)*