

# THE ULTIMATE WEIGHT TRAINING FOR WOMEN

## *INTRODUCTION*

The most common concerns experienced by women these days still focus around the subjects of health and self-image. Health-wise, women today have to deal with issues such as infertility, breast cancer, osteoporosis and others, more than they ever have before. An increase in living standards and lack of proper dietary information has also created the perfect ground for obesity. The major causes of deteriorating health and an over-sized or under-sized body are without doubt inactivity and improper diet.

Too large an availability of foods to select from, coupled with the wrong foods in the daily diet are causing an over consumption of calories, so that the daily amount of calories needed to satisfy metabolic requirements and maintain normal and healthy body weight is often two, three or more times higher than normal. The reasons for over eating are many, but accumulating extra weight in the form of body fat that for the bodily systems means only a heavier burden, harder work and reduced efficiency can not do any good.

Modern technological development hasn't left any part of our lives untouched, meaning that we are becoming less and less physically active in every day life. Cars, lifts, many electrical tools, and household appliances have taken the work away from our legs, shoulders, arms... The modern lifestyle doesn't help either. More working hours, more responsibilities, fast foods, alcohol, smoking and other new habits have brought us to the point where we have to find new ways of using and optimising all of our body systems and bringing them back into a healthy balance.

Performing the right physical activities, coupled with the proper selection and amounts of food is the best way to start reintroducing health, strength, optimal body shape and overall well-being back into our lives.

It has often been presumed that physical engagement (sports) for women has to be different than that for men, considering the differences in strength level and muscular development in women. The notion was and still is that women should engage physically in activities with less intensity; a level that is more recreational

than athletic. Women's training has always been associated with aerobics, jogging, stretching and similar activities that were branded more "female acceptable".

The results of this approach talk for themselves. Women are not getting fitter or healthier it seems, as there is not enough stimulation in those kinds of physical activities to cause the desired results.

In order to find the right answer, and find the most beneficial physical activity for women that will result in profound health, high energy levels, increased strength of skeletal muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and bone density, cardiovascular strength, lower body fat level and faster metabolism, we have to look back at women's anatomy and physiology.

Apart from the obvious differences in the reproductive system, the female anatomy also differs from men's in many other fundamentals. A woman's skeleton is shorter, lighter and narrower in the shoulder area, while wider in hip area. Female bones are lighter and smaller, as are joints, ligaments and tendons. A smaller skeleton will logically carry less muscle mass and weight in general (including body fat). This is the major reason why women are generally lighter than men (in average 30% lighter) regarding total body mass that includes bones, muscles, body fat, internal organs and other tissues.

Regarding skeletal muscles, which are the engine of the body, they are in total lighter and smaller in women than in men. Smaller muscle mass means directly slower metabolism, a lower level of strength, higher body fat levels, etc. These anatomical differences directly result in a different body tissue composition.

Hormonal differences play a major role in regulating feminine and masculine qualities, resulting in differing capacities to develop muscle size, strength, speed and other issues relative to our species. Oestrogen is the hormone responsible for fat accumulation in the female and male body, while testosterone controls muscle size development in men and women. Women producing more oestrogen and less testosterone than men, have a higher percentage of body fat (a healthy percentage is 15-20% of body mass) and lower percentage of skeletal muscle mass than men. In contrast, men produce more testosterone and less oestrogen than women, and therefore possess more muscle tissue and less body fat (a healthy percentage is 10-15% of body mass) than women.

There are also other important differences between men and women that are emotional, mental etc., and these will often influence the physical response to different sports engagements.

In the chapters to come we will help you understand how the human body responds to exercise and what level of intensity is needed to cause a positive response within the body. You will learn how to train in accordance to your biomechanics, in perfect form with minimum risk of injury and the greatest effectiveness, while finally breaking the training myths that have denied good health and a great body to so many women.

Our main task in this book will be to offer the type of physical engagement that will benefit women in the broadest perspective.