

Don't be a dumbbell: work out with weights

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(HealthDay)—Strength training needs to be part of every exercise plan, but you don't have to join a health club to reap its benefits.

You can create a state-of-the-art home gym, but an inexpensive approach will work just as well.

First, pick out a 10-by-10-foot space where you can exercise without tripping over or bumping into anything. It doesn't have to be a dedicated area as long as you can move any furniture out of the way when you're ready to work out.

Next, choose your equipment. The American College of Sports Medicine suggests starting with a few dumbbells or resistance bands plus a stability ball.

If it's in your budget, an adjustable bench adds variety to upper body workouts.

Dumbbells are hand-held weights, available from 1 to 45 pounds each. Handle choice is key. You want some friction for a good grip, but also a comfortable feel. If buying a set, be sure there are weights you can lift now and weights you can work up to.

If you're short on storage space, try stretchy resistance bands. Bands come with different tensions appropriate for different muscle groups. Some are just lengths of material you wrap around your hands. Others have handles. Test both to see what you like best.

It's a good idea to have a trainer outline a home plan with exercises that target all major muscle groups and guide you to the appropriate [weight](#) for each. Try to check in with your fitness expert periodically to evaluate your progress and step up to higher weights as needed.

More information: The American College of Sports Medicine has an online brochure on [selecting and using](#) all types of free weights.

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