

Avoid inflammatory food to help save aging muscles, says researcher

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If you're aged over 65 and having trouble unscrewing a jar or climbing a staircase, you may want to check your diet for inflammatory foods.

That's the latest "takeaway" from almost three years of Ph.D. research by Dietetics graduate Corey Linton of the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia.

His latest paper, co-authored by three UniSC academics and [published](#) in the journal *Nutrients* in 2022, found links between the symptoms of muscle degeneration and the level of inflammatory foods in the diets of older people living in their own homes.

"Those [adults](#) who recorded lower numbers on the dietary inflammatory index had higher muscle mass and strength compared to those with higher numbers on the index," Mr. Linton said. "While there is ample research into other factors influencing muscle health, from exercise to genetics, this study examined associations with people's diets, in particular with foods considered inflammatory or anti-inflammatory.

"The findings reinforce Australian nutrition guidelines, which recommend that we all eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit daily and balance our diets as much as possible."

Mr. Linton said [diet](#) was an important consideration as the rate of chronic musculoskeletal diseases such as sarcopenia (loss of [muscle](#) strength and function) continued to increase among aging Australians.

"Muscle health can be overlooked as a chronic disease but these participants told us how important it is to their daily lives, to enable independence and living in the community," he said.

His findings were based on 200 adults aged between 65 and 85 recording what they ate in one 24-hour period, noting foods with positive or negative inflammatory effects such as vegetables, fruit, [meat products](#), herbs and spices, raw and processed products.

"We then assessed their musculoskeletal health, grip [strength](#), walking and gait, and scanned their bone density and body composition using the university's gold-standard DXA machine," he said.

Ph.D. supervisor and UniSC Senior Lecturer in Nutrition and Dietetics Dr. Hattie Wright said [food](#) was a modifiable tool that could be used "a lot more" to assist healthy aging.

With an [aging population](#), it is vital to understand what people can do to maintain their independence, health, and quality of life as they grow older.

The research was co-authored by Dr. Wright, Dr. Dan Wadsworth and Dr. Mia Schaumberg.

More information: Corey Linton et al, Dietary Inflammatory Index and Associations with Sarcopenia Symptomology in Community-Dwelling Older Adults, *Nutrients* (2022). [DOI: 10.3390/nu14245319](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14245319)

Provided by University of the Sunshine Coast

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