

A new global review paper published in *Age and Ageing* sheds light on the significant number of adults age 50+ that suffer from sarcopenia, a debilitating condition characterized by progressive loss of muscle mass and strength. Credit: (c) Abbott. All Rights Reserved.

As global life expectancy increases, adults want to maintain healthy and active lifestyles well into retirement. In fact, research shows that adults think, feel and behave five to ten years younger than their actual age. But new findings from a review paper published in *Age and Ageing* show that approximately one out of three adults age 50 and older suffer from sarcopenia, a condition that could interfere with aging adults' ability to live a full and active life.

Sarcopenia, as it is known in the [medical field](#), is a condition when a person has progressive loss of [muscle](#) mass and strength. Despite the prevalence of the condition, the paper found that adults who increased the amount of [resistance exercise](#), through activities such as [weight lifting](#), and incorporated specific nutrition into their diet such as protein, HMB* and essential amino acids (EAA) including leucine showed improved muscle mass, function or strength.

"Most people think that sarcopenia only impacts people in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, but these findings show that is simply not the case," said Robert H. Miller, Ph.D., Divisional Vice President, R&D, Scientific and Medical Affairs, at Abbott Nutrition. "That's why it's important for adults and physicians to take nutrition seriously and evaluate whether people are receiving the nutrients needed to maintain muscle health as they age."

Maintaining [muscle mass](#) and strength for adults is important to reducing the risk of sarcopenia. On average, adults lose eight percent of their muscle per decade starting at age 40; that rate accelerates to 15 percent per decade starting around age 70. Muscle loss can affect a person's energy and ability to perform daily activities, such as walking, rising out of a chair, and gripping or lifting objects.

With [muscle loss](#) a reality for many adults, it is

important for them to maintain the quality of their diets, ensuring they eat enough protein to meet their bodies' needs. Many organizations are now recommending that the amount of daily proteins needs to be increased in old, frail patients, compared with younger adults. Changes occur in adults' bodies as they age: people are likely to make poor food choices, experience decreased appetite or have food intolerances as they get older. This may lead to nutrient deficiencies if not addressed either through diet or nutritional supplementation.

To maintain muscle health as you get older, the paper recommends:

- Increasing your daily intake of HMB*, protein and [essential amino acids](#) (EAAs) to help maintain muscle which can help support physical strength and functionality.
- Incorporating resistance training into your exercise routine, which can improve muscle function.
- More screening needed by doctors to identify sarcopenia. Talk to your physician to discuss other ways to maintain muscle health and prevent [sarcopenia](#).

*HMB is an amino acid metabolite that occurs naturally in muscle and is found in small amounts in some foods, such as avocado, grapefruit and catfish.

More information: Cruz AJ et al. *Age and Ageing* 2014: [In Press] [ageing.oxfordjournals.org/cont...afu115.full.pdf+html](#)

Provided by Abbott

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