

Resistance training improves quality of life and psychological functioning for older adults

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Resistance training can promote environmental quality of life and sense of coherence in older adults. This was observed in a study carried out at the University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, Finland, in co-operation with the Gerontology Research Center and the Neuromuscular Research Center.

"The importance of [resistance training](#) for the muscular strength and physical functioning in older adults is well known, but the links to psychological functioning have been studied less," says doctoral student Tiia Kekäläinen from the University of Jyväskylä.

The study included 104 healthy older adults aged 65 to 75 who did not meet the physical activity recommendations for aerobic exercise at baseline and did not have a previous strength training experience.

Participants were randomized to three training groups and a control group. The training groups participated in supervised [resistance](#) training for nine months. For the first three months, all training groups trained twice a week to become familiar with resistance training methods, and for the next six months they participated in [progressive resistance training](#) with different frequencies: once, twice or three times a week. Psychological functioning was assessed through physical, psychological, social and [environmental quality](#) of life, sense of coherence, and depressive symptoms.

Environmental quality of life improved after three months of resistance training. After nine months training, also sense of coherence increased, but only among those older adults who trained the whole nine months with twice a week frequency.

"The results suggest that older adults' ability to manage their environment and life could be improved by resistance training. In the future, it would be interesting to investigate the stability of these changes over a longer period than nine months. There is also a need for further research on the frequency of training, as this study does not allow us to say whether the differences between training groups were due to training frequency or continuity," Kekäläinen says.

This study supports the findings of previous studies that resistance training has positive effects on the psychological functioning of older people. Consequently, regular resistance [training](#) could be recommended to [older adults](#) not only for physical benefits, but also for the promotion of psychological functioning.

More information: Tiia Kekäläinen et al. Effects of a 9-month resistance training intervention on quality of life, sense of coherence, and depressive symptoms in older adults: randomized controlled trial, *Quality of Life Research* (2017). DOI: [10.1007/s11136-017-1733-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-017-1733-z)

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