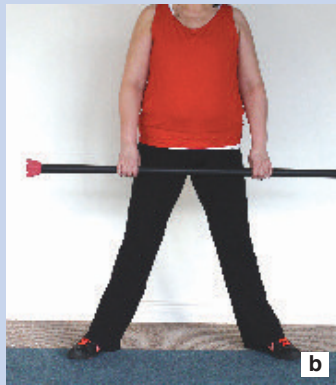
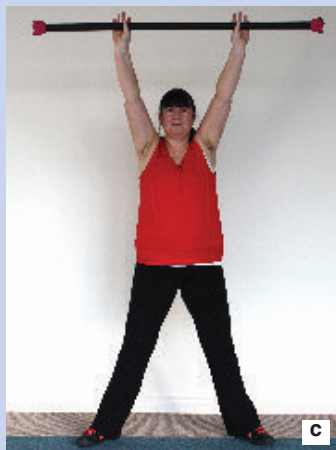




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Ladies, don't give up on resistance training

As a female fitness specialist and post-menopausal woman, I'm well aware of the challenges many of us face in maintaining a healthy body weight. I've written previously about the role of resistance training in boosting muscle mass and metabolism, which is the key to long-term weight management. In this issue, I'm revisiting this important topic, as many women still seem reluctant to incorporate RT into exercise schedules.

Advancing age and menopausal transition may lead to unwelcome weight gain for



Fitness expert Kathleen Stewart discusses the importance of resistance training in your exercise schedule

many women. This is accompanied by a loss of muscle tone and an increasingly flabby appearance with increased deposition of fat around the mid-section. These negative changes in body composition,

or ratio of lean muscle tissue to body fat, can be distressing as our formerly svelte and curvaceous physiques take on a more android, apple-shaped appearance. Slinky fashions fail to flatter and we often ex-

perience negative body image issues and a lack of self-confidence.

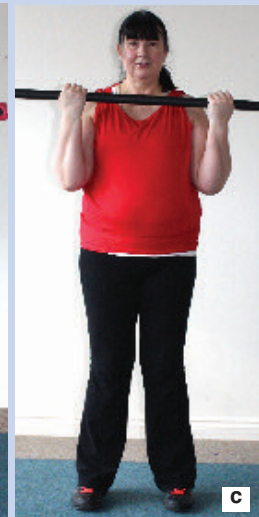
However, many of us shun resistance training, preferring to focus our efforts on cardio training such as running and cycling. During my years working in gyms, I've observed women spending many fruitless hours on the treadmill and cross-trainer in an attempt to ditch excess body fat. And while the scales may register an initial reduction in body weight, this is short-lived and plateaus out after a few weeks. It's also important to realise



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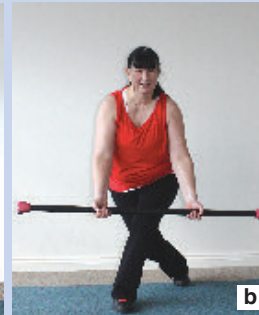
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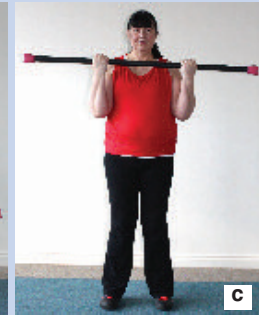
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PILE SQUAT, CLEAN AND PRESS

Legs wide and feet in the 10 to 2 position, hold the bar in an overhand grip, arms shoulder width apart. Squat slowly, as if sitting down on a chair and lower the bar. Curl bar up to shoulder level on upward phase of the squat, then press bar above your head, straightening your elbows. Return the bar to the start position and repeat. Remember to squeeze up through your gluteals and pelvic floor when arising from the squat.

REVERSE LUNGE WITH TORSO ROTATION

Holding the bar close to your chest in an underhand grip, take a big step back into a reverse lunge. Rotate your body to the same side as the back leg then return to centre. Return the back leg to the start position and repeat on the opposite side.

CURTSEY LUNGE

Standing with feet about hip width apart and holding bar in an underhand grip, step out to the right and take the left foot behind, curtseying as low as possible while lowering the bar in a reverse bicep curl. Return to start position while performing the upward phase of the curl and repeat on opposite side. Aim to perform each exercise 16 times without stopping. For unilateral exercises, that's 16 repetitions on each side! Rest briefly and move on to the next exercise. Rest and repeat the whole sequence once or twice, according to your current fitness level.

Body bars can be obtained from www.physicalcompany.co.uk/

For further information on resistance training and menopause, visit www.katsfitness.co.uk

this weight loss is not all accounted for by a reduction in body fat. A loss of lean tissue and concomitant lowering of metabolism may be occurring.

So what's the solution? A progressive RT programme that involves working a muscle or muscle group against resistance provided by body weight, equipment or gravity, until fatigue occurs. As the name implies, once the body has adapted to a particular training stimulus, changes must be made frequently for further fitness benefits to accrue.

Resistance training has

evolved in recent years and is now so much more exciting and effective than old school isolation programmes on gym machines. Modern functional conditioning exercises have much to offer the peri and post-menopausal woman.

Not only will they increase your muscle mass and help maintain healthy bones, they will improve your flexibility by encouraging movement through full range and facilitate the carrying out of everyday tasks – throughout your lifetime.

And don't worry if you can't

afford to go to the gym. Small equipment such as body bars, resistance bands and tubing, dumbbells and kettlebells is readily available for use at home. Start with a relatively light weight and increase the resistance when an exercise is no longer challenging after completing 1-3 sets of 16 repetitions.

I've put together a home workout using one of my favourite pieces of equipment, the body bar. These are available in a range of sizes from 3-7kg, allowing you to progress as your fitness levels improve.