

Spring Training

May-June 2024



Anna Hassell's strength coach, Amanda, instructs on proper form during a deadlift. Resistance training is a valuable component of any exercise program, especially as we...um.....attain higher levels of maturity. (Amanda coaches at Starting Strength in Beaverton, Oregon: 503.207.1664.)

Let's pick up something heavy (with help)!

Our future well-being is predicted by a variety of metrics, and one of the most important is muscle mass and fitness. We talk a lot about why frequent exercise is important; now let's focus on a particular *kind* of exercise. Let's look at some hard data points, starting with the fact that increased fitness and muscle mass helps just about EVERYTHING with regard to health. EVERYTHING. That means brain, mood, energy, heart, bones, cancer risk/survivorship, cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, waistline, hormone levels, insulin resistance, graceful aging. . . is that enough?

All exercise is good, but.....

Walking, biking, kayaking, gardening, and paddle/racket sports all have an important place in fitness and health. However, an important activity we often neglect is **resistance training**, such as weightlifting. This is an area in which it is especially vital to have correct form from the start, and Dr. Hassell and his family were introduced to Starting Strength in Beaverton by one of his patients; she is 75 years old and deadlifting 170 lbs!

We're never too old for resistance training!

Muscle mass is an important factor in healthy aging, and we're never too old to start weight training. In fact, 65 and 85 year olds benefit equally from strength training!¹

Better quality of life: A randomized controlled trial (RCT) of 65 postmenopausal women found the group

who did resistance exercises (chest press, leg press, back raises, etc.) three times a week improved their sleep, mood, and menopausal symptoms.²

Better mood: A RCT studied 150 middle-aged women (FLAMENCO project). A test group which engaged in 60 minutes of aerobic + resistance training 3 times a week showed improved emotional well-being and decreased emotional distress.³

Better strength, balance, and mobility: A RCT of Norwegian women over 65 with osteoporosis found that the women who did group weight-bearing strength and balance exercises (squats, step-ups, hip raises, etc.) improved their strength, balance, and mobility, and had less fear of falling.⁴

Stronger bones: A meta-analysis of nine RCTs suggested that high-load resistance training can be effective in increasing bone mineral density in women with osteoporosis and osteopenia.⁵

Less fall risk, better balance: A RCT of 72 adults aged 65 and over showed that those who did regular balance and strength training using a chair for support (squats, knee raises, lunges, etc.) 3 days a week for 12 weeks were stronger overall, could self-correct their imbalances more quickly, had better reaction time and less swaying, and better fall risk scores than those who did not exercise.⁶

Less pain: A RCT of 32 women with fibromyalgia found that those who combined walking and low-load resistance exercises (lifting dumbbells while moving major muscle groups) for 60 minutes twice a week for 8 weeks perceived they had less pain, better mood, better quality of life, and could sustain more physical work than the control group.⁷

Have about 45 minutes to learn a little bit more about good wine and good health? Dr. Hassell was interviewed by thefourtop.org podcast hosts Martín Reyes and Katherine Cole regarding the health effects of wine in moderation. Dr. Hassell was joined by Dr. Laura Catena, a Harvard and Stanford-trained biologist and physician, fourth-generation vintner, and the managing director of Bodega Catena Zapata in Argentina. To listen go to: <https://bit.ly/3PDYyDa>

Increasing muscle requires good nutrition

In addition to activities such as weight training, your body needs adequate nutrition, including high quality protein.⁸ One of our favorite ways to deliver that protein is our easy Slow Cooker Beef Stew.



Easy Slow Cooker Beef Stew with fresh spring asparagus (directions for roasted asparagus are on page 177 of Good Food, Great Medicine, 4th edition).

Beef Stew (in the slow cooker)

The beef stew recipe on page 244 of Good Food, Great Medicine (4th edition) includes the instruction to brown the meat chunks, as most proper stew recipes generally do. However, lazy cooks like me try to avoid any extra work if we can possibly get away with it, and 11 out of 10 taste testers agreed that the meat-searing step can be skipped without compromising the stew's self-respect. Even better, this easier version technically allows us more time out of the kitchen to work on increasing our muscle mass with some resistance training. The suggestion for chuck steaks is another short cut – cutting your own meat is a pretty easy task when you start with steaks. Don't get flustered by the amount of chopped onion – it pretty much melts into the stew by the time it's done. This can be prepared a day or so ahead.

(Serves about 6)

2 ½ - 3 pounds beef chuck (steaks) in ½-inch chunks
2 tablespoons paprika
2 teaspoons salt
1½ teaspoons freshly ground pepper
¼ cup white flour
2 cups red wine
3 carrots in ½-inch chunks or about 3 cups
3 Yukon gold potatoes in ½-inch chunks
2 large onions in ¼-inch dice (6–8 cups)
4 stalks of celery or about 2 cups

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 tablespoons crushed *fresh* garlic

1. Place meat chunks in a large mixing bowl, spreading meat out to create as much surface area as possible. In a small bowl blend paprika, salt, pepper, and flour; sprinkle over meat and mix thoroughly.
2. Add wine to meat mixture and set aside.
3. Chop carrots and potatoes and set aside; dice onions and celery.
4. Heat olive oil in a sturdy 6 quart pot over medium high heat. Add diced onions and celery, and sauté about 10 minutes or until softened. Add thyme and garlic, and cook a couple of minutes more.
5. Add the meat and wine mixture and the onion mixture to a slow cooker / Crock-Pot and blend well. Heat on low for 8 hours. If you have made this a day ahead, set aside until completely cool, then cover and chill overnight – or for a day or two.

Speaking events and classes

5/9/2024 – Making lifestyle change work for you:

Come hear Dr. Hassell: 6–7:30 pm in Souther Auditorium
Registration is required and seating is limited
Call 503.773.0770 or go to greatmed.org/events
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
9155 SW Barnes Rd, Portland, OR 97225

Sign up for this free medical + lifestyle newsletter at GoodFoodGreatMedicine.com

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

¹ Marzuca-Nassr, G. et al. Int J Sport Nutr Exerc Metab 2023 Oct 24;34(1):11-9

² Berin, E. et al. Climacteric 2022 Jun;25(3):264-70

³ Aparicio, V. et al. Menopause 2021 Mar 11;28(7):764-71

⁴ Stanghelle, B. et al. BMC Musculoskelet Disord 2020 Jul 18;21(1):471

⁵ Kitsuda, Y. et al. J Bone and Mineral Metab 2021;39:787-803

⁶ Chittrakul, J. et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health 2020 Apr 29;17(9):3102

⁷ Izquierdo-Alventosa, R. et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health 2020 May 21;17(10):3634

⁸ Voulgaridou, G. et al. Foods 2023;12:1218