

GRIP STRENGTH

Why is grip strength important?

To be able to grab, hold, twist and squeeze with your hands is an **essential part of your daily life**. You use these muscles to open cans or jars, grip golf clubs, hold a steering wheel, brush your teeth, and pick up a child. Muscle strength decreases as a person ages and this includes your grip strength. There are other causes of decrease grip strength such as osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, nerve damage or tendonitis in hands and wrists.

How old you are can be measured by your birthdate, but also by your body's biology which is your body working at, better or worse than your age by years of life. It can also be a clue to your **heart health** such as your risk for having a heart attack, stroke or dying from heart disease. Decreasing grip strength is linked to an increased risk of dying from any cause, including heart disease, stroke or heart attack.

A recent large research study showed that grip strength measurement is an excellent indicator of over-all muscle strength. Your grip strength may predict your future loss of ability to walk and move around well. A strong grip increases your chances of living independently longer.

(Sources: www.harvard.edu and www.uconn.edu)

For more information about health events, go to www.HealthTent.org.



To increase muscle strength

Build up muscle strength by doing resistance training two or three times a week giving your muscles a one - two days off between workouts.

Daily activities that help:

- Lift a carton of milk a few times before putting it back in the refrigerator to build arm muscles.
- Take the stairs where possible to build up muscles in legs, hips, buttocks and abdomen
- Do leg lifts and heel raises while talking on the phone or standing in line. These will help strengthen your leg and buttock muscles
- Squeeze a soft stress ball between your fingers and thumb of one hand. Hold for 30-60 seconds and repeat with the other hand.
- Do these multiple times a day.
- Wet a small towel or cloth and then using both hands wring it out. Repeat this activity several times.
- Play with clay by squishing it into a ball and then rolling it out into a long snake.