

The Strength Starter Plan

For any woman who keeps hearing about creatine and wants the training-first, hype-free version. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented, and nothing is for sale.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING · MAYO CLINIC · CLEVELAND CLINIC

1

Training comes first

Muscle-strengthening activity at least two days a week, covering the major muscle groups. (National Institute on Aging)

2

Creatine supports the work

Older adults who take creatine and do resistance exercise can improve strength; it amplifies training, it does not replace it. (Mayo Clinic)

3

Monohydrate is the form

The most common, most studied creatine supplement, and likely safe at recommended doses. (Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic)

1. Book two strength sessions into next week

The half of the pair that actually builds strength.

WHY THIS WORKS

The National Institute on Aging recommends muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week working the major muscle groups. Body-weight movements count: squats, wall pushups, sit-to-stands and lunges are all on the NIA list, and beginners are advised to start without added resistance.

SOURCE: NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Put two sessions on the calendar before the week starts
- ☐ Cover legs, hips, chest, back, abdomen, shoulders and arms across the week
- ☐ No equipment needed to begin; body weight counts

2. Take each set close to the point of difficulty

Effort is what separates strength work from movement.

WHY THIS WORKS

The NIA sets the bar plainly: at least a moderate level of effort, one set of eight to 12 repetitions is effective, performed to the point where it would be difficult to do another repetition. A comfortable set of 20 is a different exercise.

SOURCE: NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Eight to 12 repetitions, ending where one more would be hard
- ☐ One set is effective; two or three may do more
- ☐ Leave a day between sessions that repeat a muscle group

3. If you add creatine, pick plain monohydrate, third-party tested

Skip the upgraded-sounding forms.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic identifies creatine monohydrate as the most common supplement form, notes about half your creatine comes from food with the rest made in the liver, kidneys and pancreas, and calls it relatively safe. Mayo Clinic states creatine is likely safe for many people at recommended

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Label says creatine monohydrate, nothing fancier
- ☐ Look for independent certification on the label
- ☐ Talk with your doctor first if you have kidney disease

doses for up to five years. Independent certification such as NSF Certified for Sport verifies what is actually in the tub.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC · MAYO CLINIC

4. Judge it over 4 to 8 weeks, on strength

Not on the scale, and not in the first week.

WHY THIS WORKS

Mayo Clinic reports that creatine combined with resistance training can lead to greater gains in muscle strength and size, and that older adults who take creatine and do resistance exercise can improve strength. The honest test is whether your lifts, carries and sit-to-stands are getting stronger while the training stays consistent.

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Record a repeatable baseline now, such as sit-to-stands in 30 seconds
- ☐ Retest at week 4 and week 8
- ☐ Judge on strength and recovery, never on body weight

SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

National Institute on Aging, Three Types of Exercise That Can Improve Your Health · <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity/three-types-exercise-can-improve-your-health-and-physical>

Mayo Clinic, Creatine (Drugs and Supplements) · <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-creatine/art-20347591>

Cleveland Clinic, Creatine: What It Does, Benefits, Supplements and Safety · <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/17674-creatine>

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