

Should Women Lift Heavy weights ?

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I'm sure you have heard the question or asked yourself "Should women lift heavy weight?" But I think the more important question pertaining to women and weight lifting should be, "how heavy is heavy?"

A friend of mine drinks two mugs of coffee a day. That could be a lot of coffee. But don't we have to know how big the mugs are, how many scoops of coffee we used and how much milk is in the mugs?

Back to how heavy is heavy. When you are lifting weights the amount of weight you are using will be different for most exercises. So we will pick one exercise and find out how heavy it is. The standing one-arm overhead press is done with a dumbbell in one hand and pressing it straight up from the shoulder until the arm is totally un bent. If the weight you press can be done 25 times or more without stopping, then that weight is not heavy; it might feel heavy by the 25th repetition, but it's not heavy.

Now, if we pressed a weight that we could press 9 or 10 times and really couldn't do another in good form we ask, "Is that heavy?" That may be hard and intense, but it's not heavy. However, this is really important. If your goal is to prevent osteoporosis, prevent sarcopenia (muscle loss due to age or inactivity), raise your metabolism as part of your fat loss program, get muscle tone, and bring about muscle hypertrophy (increase in the number and size of myofibrils inside muscle fibers), you will want almost all of your weightlifting exercises to fall into this 9-14 rep range. It may be hard and intense, but we still can't call it heavy.

Now, if we pressed a weight that we could only press 1-3 times, THAT is heavy. A weight that heavy places quite a load on the muscles, tendons and ligaments.

What I really want you to take away from this article is that if you are in a repetition (rep) range that is too high, as in the first example, you will not reach any of the aforementioned goals.

Now that we know how heavy is heavy, I can answer the question "Should women lift heavy weight?" Unless your sport is power lifting or Olympic style one repetition max lifting, you don't have to lift heavy weight.