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### **Strength Training Becomes Essential**

It seems that the older we get, the harder we have to work at maintaining our fitness. Strength training is no exception. Strength training is essential for maintaining muscle mass; more importantly, it helps keep you independent and improves your overall quality of life. Strength training is not just for the younger folks.

As we get older, our muscle mass begins to decline. This decline starts to accelerate after age 50. Muscle loss can lead to frailty, balance problems, and an increased risk of falling. Strength training builds muscle, but it also improves our bones. As we age, we are more susceptible to osteoporosis; weight-bearing exercise helps to prevent bone loss. Building or maintaining muscle and bone mass makes daily activities easier, like climbing stairs, carrying groceries, and getting up and down from a chair.

It's not hard to get started. K-State Research and Extension offers an eight-week strength training program called Stay Strong, Stay Healthy. Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is an evidence-based program developed by the University of Missouri that offers low-impact exercise to help improve strength, flexibility, and balance in a safe, supportive environment. Another bonus to the class is that you will get to make new friends.

Our next Stay Strong, Stay Healthy opportunity begins on July 22, 2025, at the Meadowlark Extension District office in Seneca. The class will meet for 16 one-hour sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Registration is required as class size is limited. Call the Meadowlark District Extension office to register or for more information call 785-336-2184.

Aging is inevitable, but frailty doesn't have to be. Strength training empowers older adults to take charge of their health, maintain independence, and enjoy life to the fullest — one repetition at a time.