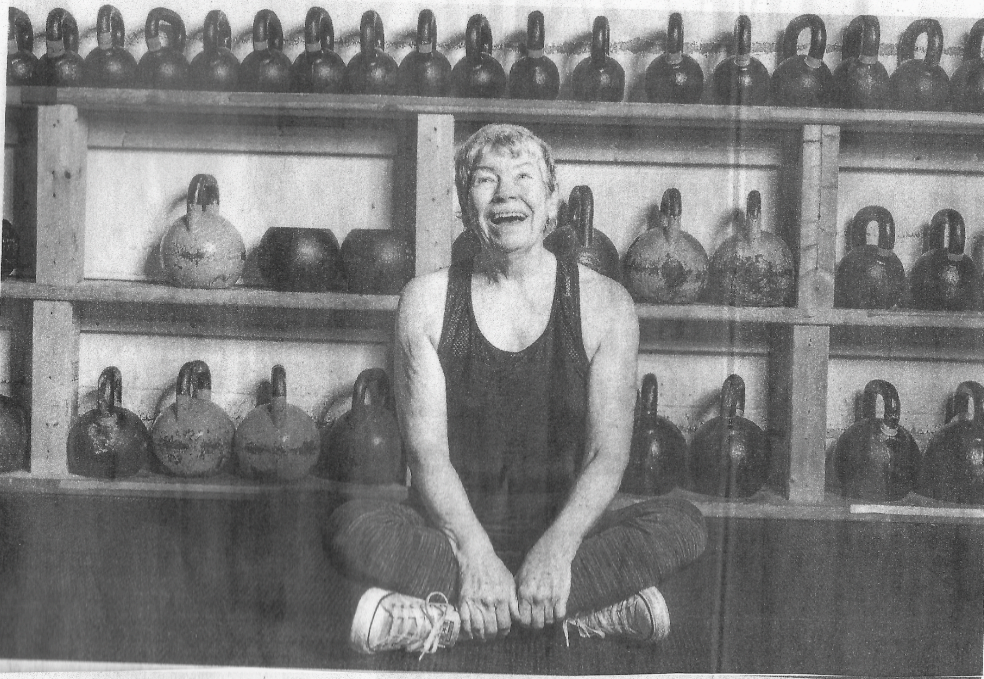


LIFE & ARTS



Pumping Iron as You Grow Older



Weightlifting is one of the best things we can do as we age, but few seniors do it, says Todd Miller, an associate professor in the department of exercise and nutrition sciences at George Washington University. "Cardio is good for you, but the health benefits of weight training, especially as we age, are grossly underrated," he says. "Improvements in bone density and muscle mass lead to increases in strength and power, and that helps prevent falls. And if one were to experience a fall, having a higher bone density means you're less likely to sustain a fracture."

Muscle strength is how much force a muscle can produce, says Dr. Miller, while muscle power is the rate at which you can produce that force.

A study published in *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews* concluded that muscle power declines earlier with advancing age, compared with muscle strength. Improved lower-extremity muscle

of falls.

Dr. Miller says the heavier load you lift, the greater the increase in bone density. He suggests starting out on weight machines, which are more forgiving in terms of technique. Then transition to free weights and find a weight you can lift 10 times, he says.

He suggests working with a personal trainer to learn proper technique and to lift with a partner who can help spot.

other protein bar. "I live alone, so I can be a lazy cook," she says. Her usual dinner is a tossed salad with a protein like precooked chicken or tuna. Most nights she has a square of dark chocolate. "If I dine out, I splurge on whatever dessert is on the menu," she says. "Yesterday I had a slice of pecan pie."

The Gear & Cost

Ms. Horn pays \$179 a month for her gym membership, which includes kettlebell classes and strength training. She prefers to lift barefoot or in socks. When she does squats, she sometimes throws on a pair of Converse Chuck Taylors so her feet don't slide.

"During competitions I prefer to lift raw, with no distraction from belts or straps, which I find uncomfortable," Ms. Horn says. Her Fitbit Zip (\$60) clips onto her clothing. (The wrist model aggravates her carpal tunnel.)

The Playlist

When she walks, she listens to the Eurhythms on her iPod. "I find their music is the perfect beat to match my pace to when I walk," she says. "It pushes me just a little faster."

WHAT'S YOUR WORKOUT? | By Jen Murphy

That's a Pretty Big Lift for 76

A retiree who can deadlift 185 pounds finds a group of older weightlifters known as the Golden Girls

WHEN PAULINE Horn's physical

therapist suggested that she start strength training, he never imagined she'd become a competitive powerlifter. At 76, Ms. Horn turns heads in the gym when she deadlifts 185 pounds five times in a row. "I don't think what I'm doing is unusual, but everyone else does," she says.

Nearly three years ago, Ms. Horn was suffering from a torn meniscus and two arthritic knees. She started doing strength exercises at home using body weight

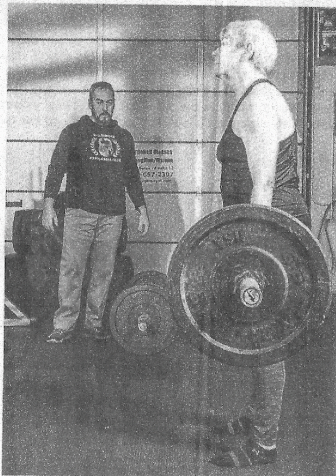
which involves performing two high-velocity lifts overhead, powerlifting is less technical and focuses on completing three controlled, heavy lifts—a squat, bench press and deadlift. "It's very empowering to see how you can keep getting stronger," she says.

Last March, Ms. Horn entered a local powerlifting competition and broke three state records with a deadlift of 170 pounds, a bench press of 77 pounds and an 82-pound squat. In September, she competed in the USA Powerlifting Bench Nationals in Scranton, Pa. "I was the only one in my age group, so I won by default," she says. "You just have to outlast everybody else and you're a winner."

Ms. Horn retired from her job as a nurse anesthetist in 2010 and says she considers weight training her new job. She credits her newfound lower-body strength for relieving her knee pain. "People tell me all of the time that I'm going to hurt myself, but I think it's the other way around," she says. "Strengthening my muscles, particularly my back muscles, protects me from injury."

The Workout

Ms. Horn hits the gym three mornings a week for 60 to 90 minutes. She warms up with various kettlebell exercises, including swings, overhead presses and rows. She recently added the Turkish get-up, an exercise that requires you to hold one kettlebell overhead, supporting yourself with the other hand to transition from lying to kneeling to standing. She ends with a farmer's walk, where she walks the length of the gym while holding a kettlebell in each hand.



Pauline Horn performs a deadlift at Baltimore Kettlebell Club under the guidance of coach and gym owner Dan Cenidoza.

she can't get to the gym, she will do push-ups at home. "I do real push-ups," she emphasizes. "I can do 12 with good form."

She tries to walk 5 miles a day and tracks her steps with a Fitbit. "I don't always hit the mark in the winter," she says. Ms. Horn also stretches daily. "So many people my age can't even turn their heads without pain," she says. "A few minutes of stretching a day keeps those

pains away."

The Diet

Ms. Horn tries to eat 2,000 calories a day and 100 grams of protein, a number she came up with based on talks with her coach and doctor. "I find that ratio really helps me build and maintain muscle mass," she says. "In the last year I've lost an inch from my waist without losing any weight."

She has a protein bar when she wakes up and late morning makes an omelet. She often has two or three servings of Greek yogurt during the day, and late afternoon an

On Tuesdays she focuses on bench presses and on Thursdays squats. On Saturdays she runs through bench presses, squats and deadlifts. She's also working on the clean, an Olympic lifting technique that's the first half of a move called the clean and jerk. It involves taking a shoulder-width grip on the barbell while in a squat position and using your legs to drive the bar from the ground upward to chest height.

Ms. Horn keeps a set of weights at home and uses a mirror on her bathroom door to check her form. "I like to make sure I'm low enough in my squats," she says. If

She's broken three Maryland state records and now considers weight training her job.

and dumbbells, but quickly lost motivation. Her physical therapist introduced her to the Baltimore Kettlebell Club and she got hooked on learning proper weightlifting techniques.

She started with group kettlebell classes and exercises that helped strengthen the stabilizing muscles around her knees. Ms. Horn is one of a handful of women in their 50s, 60s and 70s who train there. Other gym members call them the Golden Girls.

A year-and-a-half ago Ms. Horn started taking strength and conditioning classes with the gym's owner, Dan Cenidoza, a former winner of Maryland's Strongest Man competition. Under his guidance, Ms. Horn started powerlifting. Unlike Olympic weightlifting,