



**Stay Strong, Stay Healthy—Level 2 (SSSH-2)** is an evidence-based, eight-week exercise program for older and sedentary, middle-aged adults. SSSH meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations for healthy muscle strengthening activities. Its customized strength training routine provides documented health benefits<sup>1,2</sup> that help participants live independently longer.

Trained and certified instructors lead the program's hourlong classes. SSSH classes meet twice each week, and include warm-up activities, strengthening exercises with or without weights and cool-down activities. Participants also are encouraged to do the exercises on their own a third time each week. Over the eight weeks, participants learn the exercises and begin to improve strength and balance. Once a course concludes, participants are encouraged to continue the SSSH program at home or with a community group.

This program utilizes four pieces of equipment: a chair, a yoga mat, if desired, hand weights and adjustable ankle weights. The class includes eight to 10 specific exercises that are performed while seated in a sturdy chair, lying down or standing behind the chair for balance. SSSH-2 classes are unique because hand weights and adjustable ankle weights are provided for participants during classes in which weights are used.

The average SSSH-2 participant is 70 years old, has completed at least two SSSH-1 courses and has a baseline knowledge of strength training. Placing participants in SSSH-2 who have not yet mastered SSSH-1 movements puts them at increased risk for injury. An instructor may have younger participants with a solid foundation in strength training and exercise who want to register for SSSH-2 after only one SSSH-1 course. If so, the instructor may use the fitness assessments to determine if they score well for their age. Use professional judgment to pass these participants on to SSSH-2, taking into account their scores, history of exercise/training, exercise form on SSSH-1 exercises, good attendance and attitude in class. Err on the side of caution.

Participants may experience mild to moderate muscle soreness after each class. Muscle soreness is a sensation that indicates improved muscle strength, but it also may be uncomfortable. This light to moderate sensation of soreness is safe; however, if the soreness lasts longer than two to three days, the participant's body is indicating that it needs rest to repair tissue.

1. Stephen Ball, Robin Gammon, Patricia J. Kelly, An-Lin Cheng, Keyna Chertoff, Lydia Kaume, Eduardo L. Abreu, and Marco Brotto, "Outcomes of Stay Strong, Stay Healthy in Community Settings," *Journal of Aging and Health* 25, no. 8 (2013): 1388-1397.

2. Emily Crowe and Stephen Ball, "Effectiveness of Advanced Stay Strong, Stay Healthy in Community Settings," *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine* 1 (2015): 1-7.

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"Muscle strengthening should be done **2 or more days a week**.

- All major muscle groups should be worked. These are the legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.
- Exercises for each muscle group should be repeated 8 to 12 times per set. As exercises become easier, increase the weight or do another set."

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity*

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Mild to moderate muscle soreness is a normal part of healthy strength training and this program.

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Any participant who experiences sharp, persistent, shooting or prolonged pain should stop exercising and consult a care provider.

## SSSH-2 is not:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Cardiac rehab
- Aerobics class
- Weight-loss program
- Yoga, Pilates, tai chi
- Dance aerobics

We do NOT use exercise balls, exercise bands, machines or barbells.

We do NOT ask people to grunt, strain or be in pain (sharp, shooting, etc.).

We **do** ask people to move to the floor in SSSH-2, **but** provide alternative exercises for those not comfortable doing so.