What's a healthy weightlifting schedule?  

Dear Alice,

Is it healthy to lift weights everyday, or is it better to lift every other day?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Weight training [2] can add a lot of benefits to your fitness routine. But just like any other training regimen, rest is an essential factor to muscle health. By resting and leaving a day in between exercising a specific body part or muscle, you are giving your body enough time to reap the benefits of your hard work.

Weightlifting can cause micro-tears in the muscle fiber(s). These tears can temporarily reduce muscle strength and cause some of the soreness you feel after a new exercise or tough workout. Rest time allows your muscles to build up the protein necessary to heal and become stronger. All in all, it takes about two days to heal any muscle fibers torn by weightlifting.

If you want to lift weights every day (remember to reserve at least one day a week for rest), try to focus on different muscle groups in three-day cycles, leaving two days in between the same group. For example:

- Day one: back and biceps
- Day two: chest and triceps
- Day three: legs and abs
- Day four: repeat day one

Other tips to consider for safer weightlifting are as follows:

- To help prevent injury, start with some light cardiovascular activity to warm up your muscles.
- Avoid rushing through your weightlifting workout — slow and steady is the way to go.
- Limit your weightlifting motions while making sure you are keeping correct form. If you are not certain that you are weightlifting properly, you can ask a trainer for some assistance.
- Remember to breathe! Inhale and exhale normally while you lift.
• Rest muscle groups adequately between workout sessions (as mentioned above).

Following these tips should leave you in tip top shape — and your muscles happy!

Alice!
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