

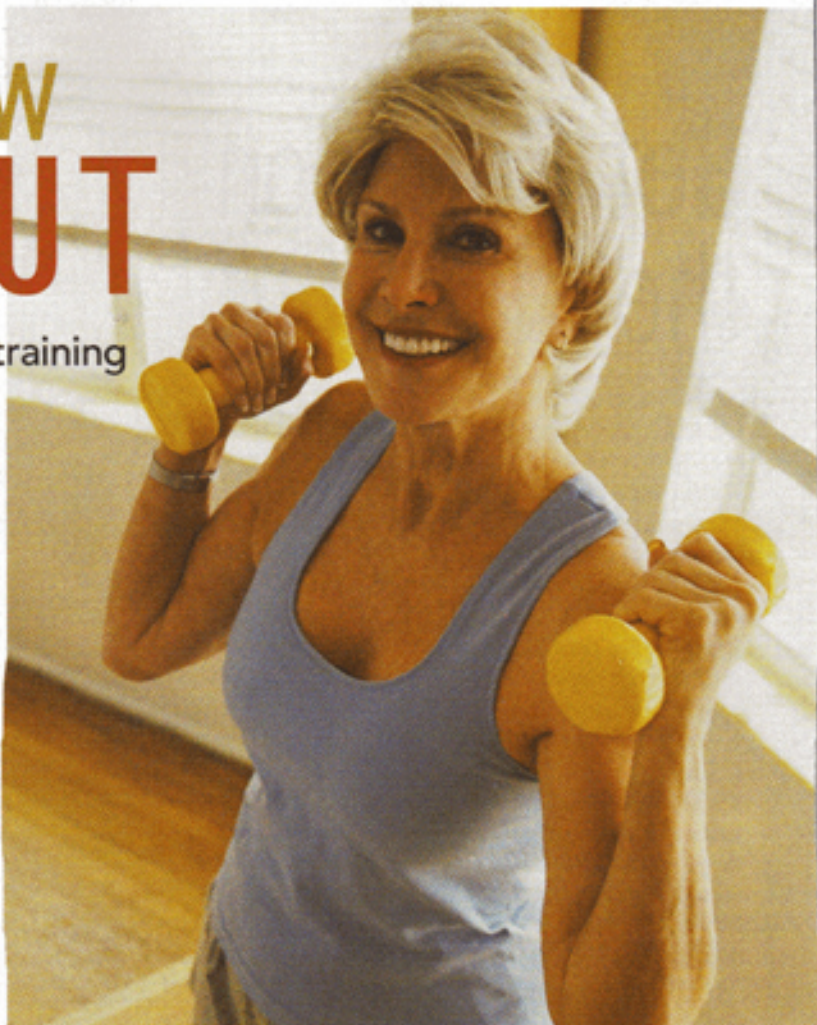
# A Super Slow WORKOUT

Get the benefits of strength training sooner by taking your time.

**S**OME THINGS ARE BEST DONE SLOWLY, AND WEIGHT LIFTING IS ONE OF THEM, SAY SOME FITNESS EXPERTS. Traditional weightlifting involves brief, intense workouts focusing on repetitions, or number of times you perform a single exercise. In that type of workout, weights go up, down, up, down, with about two seconds' time in each direction. With a method called slow weights or slow-cadence lifting, the lifting and lowering motions are drawn out to about 10 seconds each. Because the muscle is taxed over a longer period with each repetition, fewer repetitions and a shorter workout time are required. One or two short sessions per week are the norm.

Several studies show greater muscle strength and endurance increases with the slow approach than with the traditional approach. Pushing a muscle to work hard, like when you lift weights, activates muscle fibers, which respond by growing stronger as well as bigger, if pushed hard enough over time. The slow-weight theory says that a slower speed activates more muscle fibers, which ultimately spurs more muscle growth.

Gaining more strength in less time and with fewer repetitions appeals to everyone, but the slow method of weightlifting offers something more to people with arthritis: more control of motion through the entire movement, causing less pressure on the joints and preventing pain. "People with stiff or impaired joints who



need extra protection when they exercise are the ones who benefit the most," says David Fischer, MD, a rheumatologist in Palo Alto, Calif. He has recommended dozens of patients do this type of resistance training.

Hemma Prafulchandra, 38, of Mountain View, Calif., is one such patient. Fifteen years after being diagnosed with aggressive rheumatoid arthritis (RA), Prafulchandra was on short-term disability from her management job, which required travel once every other month. She started training with a physical therapist who offered a program called SuperSlow (see box), and after four months of twice-weekly visits, she switched to a once-weekly session. "I had gotten to the point where it was painful to travel. Now, after a year of therapy I am back to work and traveling every three weeks."

—LINDA RICHARDS

## Where to Go for Slow Weight Training

The slow weight trend is growing, and some health clubs and physical therapy offices have professionals trained in the method. "SuperSlow" is an exercise program developed in the early '80s for use in an osteoporosis study. Today 30 states have centers or physical therapists that offer "SuperSlow" and "SuperSlow Rehab," a modified protocol that provides a safe but intense exercise program for people with medical conditions. An experienced trainer can create an individual, slow-paced strengthening workout with appropriate exercises and teach proper lifting form — essential for avoiding joint injury. And if pushing or grasping weights or machine handles is difficult, trainers share adaptive techniques to protect joints as needed. For more information, call 866/239-5908 or visit [www.superslow.com](http://www.superslow.com).