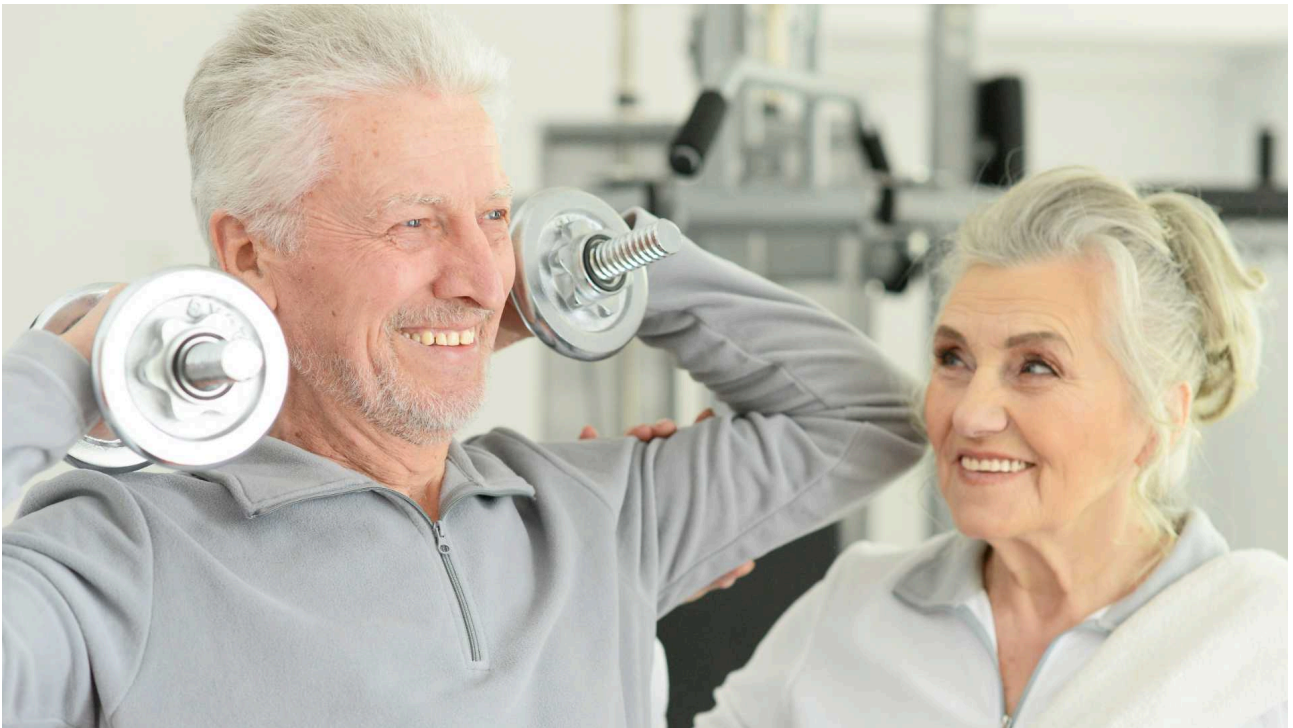


## How to age well in 2022



### The goal of ageing well

The ultimate goal of ageing well is to maintain your independence which means still being able to get around, think well, and physically do what you need to look after yourself and enjoy your life.

It all comes down to maintaining good mobility which means maintaining your muscle strength.

### Sarcopenia

Sarcopenia is age-related muscle loss and can begin as early as age 35. Typically, a person over 35 loses 1-2% of muscle mass per year. After the age of 60, this can accelerate to 3% per year.



Weaker muscles reduce your ability to:

- Balance (making falls more likely and resulting injuries more serious)
- Shower and dress yourself
- Do your grocery shopping
- Clean your house
- Cope with and recover from illness or injury
- Get out and about to visit friends and family for that all-important social support and connection.

## The role of hormones

Oestrogen and testosterone are anabolic meaning these hormones help build muscle. Unfortunately, as we age, these hormones decline, meaning muscle breakdown can quickly overtake the rate of muscle building. For women, this becomes especially evident post-menopause.

Don't be fooled if you are ageing and you don't see your weight going down. It may just mean that muscle is being replaced by fat.

## What can you do to maintain muscle mass in later years

Muscle loss with ageing is not a foregone conclusion because it is not the only factor involved. Disuse of muscles plays a huge role, making exercise, movement and strength training hugely important for ageing well. Other factors which can increase the rate of muscle loss include:

- Bed rest
- Illness/injury
- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cancer
- Chronic inflammatory or immune conditions
- Cardiovascular or respiratory disease
- Neurodegenerative conditions (such as Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and Alzheimer's)

Protein consumption is the next most important thing because it provides the amino acid building blocks needed to create muscle tissue. As we age our need for protein increases due to this muscle loss and the fact that our ability to break down and utilise protein declines with age.

## Solutions

1. Resistance exercise at least twice a week
2. A minimum intake of 0.8 g of good quality protein per kg of body mass per day (e.g. if you weigh 70kg you will need at least 56g of protein per day)
3. Certain naturopathic products can
  - assist the body to maintain muscle strength,
  - encourage muscle repair and condition,
  - lower the risk of conditions related to muscle loss
  - improve health conditions that contribute to muscle mass loss.
4. See your Naturopath for a plan to keep you well and maintain your muscle mass as you age.

## Other consequences of ageing

Of course, loss of muscle mass is not the only consequence of ageing and low activity levels. In addition to sarcopenia, you may come across the terms osteoporosis (loss of bone mass), immunosenescence (a decline in the function of the immune system) and inflammaging (an increase in low-grade systemic inflammation). Each a subject for their own blog.