

## RACHEL SCHUTZ: Strength training, lifting weights, and body image

Written by Abeni Hill

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According to the Mayo Clinic, strength training and lifting weights is an important part of exercising because it has been known to help gain lean muscle and achieve weight loss goals more efficiently.

Strength training can also help increase bone density and some studies have shown that strength training helps older adults focus more.

"You can get as good of a cardio workout from strength training," said personal trainer Rachel Schutz. "With the more lean muscle mass your body has, it is easier to maintain your weight."

Schutz said that strength training doesn't only lead to strength of the body but also to strength of mind.



"Your body is capable of more than your mind thinks it is," said Schutz. "Strength training helps you build self-confidence. It pushes you out of your comfort zone."

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Schutz is a fitness trainer at the F.I.T. Lab, 1565 Como Ave., Ste. 102, St. Paul, and owns her own business, Defyne Fitness. Schutz founded her own business in 2005 and her clients are predominately female. One of the reasons Schutz started Defyne Fitness was to help guide women in the weight room.



"I remember going to the weight room and feeling intimidated because I didn't know what to do," said Schutz.

When Schutz was in college, she was a Division I track athlete and had a female strength training coach who she admired for her strength and who she considered an inspiration.

"She taught us well," said Schutz. "It was empowering going in the gym and being confident."

Through her experience of personal training with women, Schutz discovered many women felt nervous about going into the weight room at the gym.

"They say, 'I don't know what to do when I enter the gym so I just get on the elliptical,'" said Schutz, who said many women do not want to lift weights because they are afraid they will lose some of their femininity.

"I think that's a common misconception among women," said Schutz. "I can be a walking example of heavy strength training and still looking feminine."

Schutz said many women that come to her suffer with negative body image. "It's easier for us to find things we don't like about ourselves than to embrace the good things about us," said the trainer.

Schutz encourages her clients to think realistically about their fitness goals. "It's about focusing on being healthy and happy with yourself. This helps women be confident where they are and in their own skin," she said.

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Schutz holds regular strength and conditioning classes at the F.I.T Lab in addition to working with clients one-on-one. For class schedules and to inquire about personal training sessions, contact Schutz at (612) 250-9768 or via her website, [www.defyfitness.com](http://www.defyfitness.com) .