

Will you increase your metabolism by lifting weights and increasing strength?

According to Dr. Claude Bouchard, a scientist at Laval University in Quebec, the answer is “No.” Weight lifting has no effect on resting metabolism because any added muscle is miniscule compared with the total amount of skeletal muscle in the body.

Muscle actually has a low metabolic rate at rest, which is most of the time. According to Jack Wilmore, exercise physiologist at Texas A&M, the average amount of muscle men gain after a serious weight-training program was 2 kilograms, which would cause them to use 20 more calories a day.

If you want to burn more calories, you must do something intense like running rather than just putting on muscle in hopes that it will burn more calories while you rest.

However, when muscles are more developed and efficient, they are better at using fuel, which reduces the need for excess insulin in the blood. Consequently, you are less likely to get diabetes. Strength-training maintains functional capacity, but it is not the exercise of choice for losing weight.

Ultimate Fitness by Gina Kolata, Science writer for the NY Times.