

GETTING STRONGER

How to find, start and succeed with a
strength exercise program



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About me

I am a physical therapist and currently specialize in chronic pain and hypermobility. This path chose me as much as I chose it, earning my Doctorate in physical therapy in 2005, trying to solve my own muscle pain.

My earliest issues with my hypermobility came around the age of 15. I was a high school athlete and assumed that the chronic injuries I suffered were simply because of how active I was.

I paid for many treatments out-of-pocket with money I didn't really have. All in the desperate hope that something would change. But what hurts the most was that people often underestimated my pain since I showed few outward signs of any illness.

I dealt with daily headaches and loose joints. How could anyone tell me that my pain wasn't real when I dealt with it constantly?

By the time I earned my degree in exercise physiology, I had already spent years dealing with the pain.

One of the pivotal moments that would define my career was after a class by a prominent physical therapy guru. When I asked her about my situation, her response was short and to the point, "I don't work on people like you."

I left bewildered and frustrated but doubly motivated to find the answer to an even bigger question. "If you won't help, then who will?" I realized then that I need to quit looking elsewhere for answers.

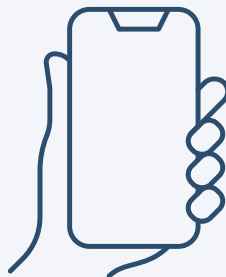
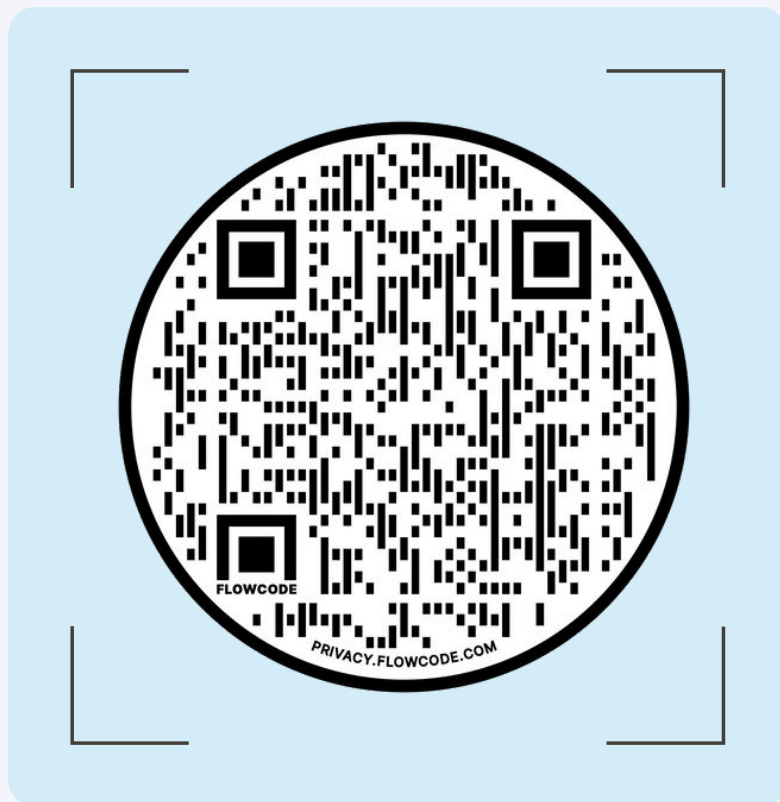
As an athlete, I did many things "the way you were supposed to do them" and struggled a lot with not getting stronger, poor performance, and increased pain with working out. I had to learn that I had to adjust the type of exercise I was doing, how I was doing it, and less weight to be able to make the progress I needed. I now make it my job to educate those living with pain and dysfunction and the medical professionals they depend on to diagnose them. I have had a great opportunity to work with clients with chronic conditions, both from genetic and trauma tendencies.

Learn more about my story [here](#).

Social media QR

I invite you to join the hypermobility online community by following and interacting with our social channels.

Simply scan the QR code below and check out all my available resources!



The gym cycle

So often, I hear from people how they have tried and tried and are told if they go to the gym, they will feel better, but after a lot of effort find themselves defeated, sorer than they were when they started and developing an aversion to exercise.



Typically, that happens within about 4 to 6 weeks. It usually starts when they make an effort and have great resolve. It feels good to be doing something constructive, but at 2 weeks, they start getting sore, so they push through.

At 4 weeks, they are too sore to keep doing their program and are cutting back, and by 6 weeks, they have quit altogether. It is a rough cycle that many people repeat over and over again through lots of effort, only to be disappointed. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Strength and its importance

When people have a chronic condition such as hypermobility, autoimmune disorders, or chronic pain issues, having more strength is crucial. It is your muscles that support and unload your joints.

Without strength, you will struggle with all movement. Lying in bed for 4 weeks will drop your strength by 50%. That is a hard hill to climb out of, but it is doable if you are going in the right direction, then time is on your side.

It is important to have the strength you need and some extra reserves so that you can recover without becoming symptomatic if you do get sick or have a flareup. Strength is also something we have to work on consistently. Doing it for a month is great, but you will start to slide backward when you stop. We have to create a habit, a pattern, and something that can follow us through the year that is not a “to-do list” item.

It is a life skill. While some exercise is better than none, even if it is not ideal, it is crucial to understand how to create and implement a program that can adjust as your life does.

Several beliefs hold people back. I will show you what they are, give you the tools to overcome them and help you see that it might be easier than you think. It often seems that strengthening programs are impossible to follow.

01. Current adherence rates are <50% when they are medically prescribed and worse if you try to do it independently.
02. If you search for “How to start an exercise program,” you get About 1,040,000,000 results, and if you add chronic illness, that cuts it down to about 350,000,000 results.

Strength programs do more than just make you stronger. They improve your pain levels, increase your metabolism, help improve your brain function to improve your ability to learn, make decisions, and lessen depression and anxiety symptoms, all in addition to improving your ability to live the life you want. There are no negative side effects as with drugs, and the cost is something everyone can afford. The real question is, why wouldn't you want to exercise regularly?

THERE IS SO MUCH TO GAIN!



Know your why

The **why** you should exercise is unique for each person.

To determine your **why**, you need to know what your goals are. What is your individual motivation for making a change in your life?

You wouldn't be reading this guide if you were happy with how everything was working and didn't feel that you needed to change or improve, but you need more than "I want to work out" or "I want to exercise more."

What benefit will that give you? Because my doctor told me to, it will only last a short period of time and definitely won't keep you going when you are tired or busy. You need to think about all the things that you would like to do better. Things like; More steps to use in a day, easier to get in and out of bed, easier to carry my laundry up the stairs, or get through my work day without getting so tired, or have less pain.

You want to focus on creating the habit versus creating the perfect program. A perfect program or exercise completely depends on what your individual goal is. For example, the perfect program for someone wanting to increase their endurance and be able to do things longer is different from someone who needs to be able to lift more weight more easily for a job stocking shelves. Goals keep you going beyond the first week when you are full of motivation and past when you are tired, busy, and feeling poorly. They remind you that there is a reason you are doing this and that it needs to stay at the top of your priority list. You don't often have to justify to yourself why you need to get dressed or shower before you go to work. You shouldn't have to justify why you need to exercise to care for your body, either.



The role of fear

Fear holds us back and keeps us in the status quo. It causes us to avoid things that might be helpful and limits our progress toward our goals. It is avoiding not knowing what could happen and not trusting that things could change.

Making small and specific changes minimizes your risk and provides control. Having a structured program provides the framework for this.

After bad or overwhelming experiences, I tend to hear frustration from people that they will never be able to find, start or succeed in a strengthening program.

They don't have the time, or it just doesn't work for them. This often comes from poor experiences, increased pain, fatigue, injury, and overwhelm.

Finding, starting, and succeeding with a strengthening program is less complicated and expensive than people think.

I will teach you these simple yet effective steps to strengthen your body without extreme pain and suffering and succeed in a strengthening program that works for you.



How to structure your program

Exercise programs have three components. Start with small simple goals, where you focus on one area and only 3 items.

This will not only make it easy to complete, but it also makes it hard to talk yourself out of, which is equally important.

Keep it simple and consider it as 3 parts:

01.

CARDIO/ ENDURANCE

Which is your walking, biking, and generally just getting your heart rate up.

02.

STRENGTHENING

This can be isometric, body movement, or weight, but it must be specific. Using correct mechanics and the right muscle patterns is crucial. You also need to keep it balanced. For every muscle you strengthen, you should also strengthen the opposite one. Keep it easy and pick 4 exercises using opposites for 2 movement patterns. For example, if you do bicep curls, then do a form of tricep presses. If you do quadriceps strengthening, then do hamstrings. This creates a total of 4 exercises. That is enough to move forward but not enough to overdo.

03.

BALANCE AND COORDINATION

Balance declines with age, so keeping it in great shape is a way to avoid injury, and falls, and keep your nervous system connected to your body. Pick one exercise to challenge your balance safely.

Basic steps

Follow these basic steps:

01. **START SMALL**

Use small weights or resistance and small movements. You can start at the beginning with isometrics if you need to. Isometrics are just turning the muscle on and off without moving anywhere. Often people try to go too far. Just use your happy range; the amount of movement that is easy to control correctly and less is often more.

02. **USE THE CORRECT MUSCLES AND ISOLATE PATTERNS**

This is huge! Make sure that you are using the right muscle for the exercise. If you are unsure what that is, a picture typically goes along with the exercise and shows you where you should feel it. If you are not feeling it in that area, try again. Use a mirror or video to watch your movement. Are you moving just the part that should be moving? Are you keeping other areas stable? If not, you may need to try again. What do you feel working or not working? If you can't feel something working, then try a more supportive position. See *step 3*.

03. **START IN A SUPPORTIVE POSITION THAT WORKS FOR WHAT YOU NEED**

The progression starts from lying on your back, potentially in bed, if you need that. You can then move to exercise in sitting and finally to standing. This progression works from most supportive to least. Exercises can be very challenging when lying down, so don't think that they are easy. They are just more supportive. That means fewer things to control and fewer issues with blood pressure or dizziness if that is an issue for you.

04. **ALWAYS BREATHE!**

Holding your breath causes more issues, so if you can't remember to breathe, try counting, saying your ABCs, or singing, because if you are vocalizing, you are breathing!

05. **NICE AND EASY MOVEMENTS**

Thinking easy up and easy down, not too fast or too slow, gives you the best results to start with and allows you to be mindful of what you are doing.

07. **70% EFFORT**

Yes, you read that right. I said 70% effort, not 100%. Often that is part of the problem. People try so hard that they over-recruit muscles using far more than what they need. This creates compensation patterns and more pull on their joints. You actually need to do less. Be present and focused, but 70% effort is perfect!

The best exercises to do

When you are starting, the best exercises will be the ones you need the most.

This is why you will find a million different exercise programs, and yours may be completely different from all of them.

When you don't know what you need, start with core/ trunk strengthening, which helps everything: abdominal and glute strength, hips, and shoulders.

If you don't have strength in those, then it doesn't matter what your biceps can do; you still won't be able to lift anything.

I recommend this structure:

Monday	Core/back
Tuesday	Cardio/endurance
Wednesday	Shoulders/ arms
Thursday	Balance/stability
Friday	Legs/ hips
Saturday	Rest
Sunday	Rest

How to progress

The safe route is 10% per week max progressions. The "do as much as you can" philosophy or "do as much as you feel like" rarely works.

That is what causes people to overdo on the good days, flare up and need several days to a week to recover, and then repeat when they start feeling better.

The better strategy is to start at the level you are and then increase 10% a week or every 3 workouts. This is the amount that your body can actually progress well.

How to increase by 10%

You can change 1 factor at a time at the 10% rate.



SPEED

How fast you are doing something. The faster you move the more challenging it is. If you are walking on a treadmill at 2.0 mph and want to increase 10%, you increase your speed to 2.2 mph. If you are walking outside or hiking, you estimate or watch how long it takes you to reach the same point. Less time to get to the same place means you are moving faster



RESISTANCE OR INCLINE

How much weight you use, or how hard a movement is. With walking it will be incline, it could also be the resistance on your bike, how heavy is the weight you are using, or the stiffness of a resistance band. Some of these factors are easy to adjust 10%, while others you will need to estimate. Use your best guess of what 10% is. This could possibly be pulling the band a little farther, or adding a little more body weight to your exercise. Don't stress or overthink it, just be mindful.



TIME OR REPETITIONS

This is the easiest to track and adjust. This is just the factor of how long you are doing a task, and increasing that time. If you bike for 10 minutes, the next week increase it to 11 minutes. $10 \text{ min} \times 1.1 = 11$. Feel free to use calculators in the beginning. The point is not to add math to your workout, but to get a feeling that your progression isn't 10 min to 20 min to 30 min, but a slower ramp-up that won't hurt you.

What if I can't change something exactly?

If you are increasing one factor more significantly than 10%, you can make adjustments to tolerate it better by decreasing the other two factors. For example, if the hike you are doing is really steep, you can offset the incline/resistance, by going slower and taking more breaks, and trying to make it a shorter hike.



Other recommendations

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Long lists of exercise programs become overwhelming. Minimize this by keeping your options simple. Use a timer as a guide so you don't have to count repetitions, you can focus on your movement, and have a consistent pattern.

HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN?

Starting with 3 days a week is ideal. You should have a day off in between to allow for recovery and strengthening. Our bodies improve while we rest. Too much rest and there is no reason for them to improve. Not enough rest and they start breaking down

Give 30 min to your program to be able to address all the areas. The most common feedback I get is "I don't have time and I don't have the energy". I have broken programs down into as little as 5 min starting places.

You can do this as well but your goal should be to work up to a total of 30 minutes.

SCHEDULE IT AT A SPECIFIC TIME OF DAY

Often earlier in the day is more successful than later, but find a consistent place that can live in your schedule and stick with it.

Match up exercise with something you enjoy, like mindless television, music, podcasts, or something you can look forward to, which will keep you motivated as well.

People often think that it takes a lot of effort and money to get going, and that couldn't be further from the truth.

We like to tell ourselves that as a way of procrastinating, we need money to buy equipment, and once we have that, THEN we will start working out.

Have you ever noticed that it never seems to be the right time? That is because now is always the right time.

Basic equipment that is safe to use

AT HOME

I prefer little to no equipment if you are going to exercise at home. This limits your reasons for not exercising and makes even small spaces doable.

To add to your options my favorite things are bands or light weights typically 2lb–5lb.

There are many band options for purchase if you need them at reasonable prices. Loop bands are very versatile but make sure you get light resistance options.

They also come in different sizes and my favorite is the 14 in loop. They are a little larger which makes them easier to use and put on as well as more versatile.

To make sure you are doing things well, you want to start with very light resistance and then work up. You can always go harder.

AT THE GYM

Start with machine weights first. They help you to control your body position and provide support. Make sure you start with lightweight and with movements that only address one direction of one joint.

This allows you to focus on that movement and do it well. As your strength improves you can progress to free weights but don't start there until you have both a solid program and solid strength first.

For cardio exercise start with less impact activities like biking. Recumbent is typically easier than upright biking but you can use what you have available and what works better for you.

Ellipticals are non-impact but you have to watch your trunk stability to make sure you are controlling your trunk.

Walking on a treadmill is a better place to start than running, and moving stairs are hard for people with knee problems, so I typically don't start with those first.

Swimming is great exercise and non-impact if you enjoy the water. If you need help with your stroke, then please take some lessons. There is definitely a right way and a wrong way to swim well and you want to dial it in if you will be swimming regularly.

TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS



Tracking what you are doing, allows you to keep yourself on track and accountable. You can use any method that makes sense and is easiest for you. Remember we want easy and simple.

Paper checklists are simple and easy to use. For those who enjoy technology, there are many apps and options at your disposal. Fitness trackers are my favorites, such as Garmin or Fitbit.

These have apps that will track your exercise for you and provide reminders and lots of data. Just remember the best option is the one you will use. If you already have some of this equipment, check out the online tutorials to see how well they can help you with your program.

Periodically look back at your tracking to see how well you have done. Celebrate your wins and successes. This includes progress in speed, or weight as well as consistency.

Your goal is to keep your consistency and just make the best use of your time. Not to continue to add or do more.

Remember where you were and as long as you are making progress you are on the right track. If you are running into trouble, return to looking at your barriers.

What is holding you back?

Or getting in your way?

And look to make a change. Finding your best program is an evolving and changing option, but it is always worth the effort.

So many diseases can be improved or eliminated by activity and exercise. Focus on making yourself healthier and feeling better, starting today.

The Hypermobility Solution

In my work with hypermobility cases and connective tissue disorders I found that the key was changing how we work and look at these issues.

Instead of doing stretching for the tight muscles, we needed to shorten and strengthen them. A group I often get a lot of are those who have been told repeatedly to work out, go to the gym, and have done physical therapy programs that flare them up.

When I broke down what they were doing with their programs, I found the same issues, and the fact that the exercise program wasn't the problem, but the type of program and how they were doing it was.

They were doing too much weight, too large of a movement, using the wrong muscles and patterns, and overdoing it so that by about 4 weeks, they were worse than they had been before. This makes people never want to exercise again and understandably so. But with that, they lose the opportunity to make their lives better.

It wasn't their effort or desire, but the execution that caused the problem. They needed to understand how to start small, build on a solid foundation, and do less. If they could do this, then they had success and a lifelong skill that would continue to benefit them.

In a world where information is power, if I could create more access to information that is hard to find, more people could get better.

This led to the creation of an online program to provide information to the people who need it, can benefit from it, and can find hope. I also found this works for many different types of issues, not just hypermobility.

This program outlines their specific needs and basic places to start for them to find success in a model that is easy to follow along and review often. It addresses each of the issues and provides programs for strength, and balance, in addition to posture, basic movement patterns, and other tips.

Hypermobility Solution is a guide for your path towards a pain-free life from the comfort and safety of your home and with the accountability and support from our team and online community.

MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN DIAGNOSED AND...

- You're struggling to find answers, resources, or just even support.
- You're feeling unmotivated, alienated due to your condition and symptoms, or even depressed.
- You can't seem to find clear or complete professional resources to help you understand your symptoms and give you an accurate diagnosis.

OR, MAYBE YOU HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED AND...

- You are still processing it.
- You haven't found any treatment or solution that helps you reduce the pain when it's at its worst.
- You'd just really appreciate some answers and solid guidance that can help you support a loved one suffering from Hypermobility.

IMAGINE HOW MUCH BETTER YOU'LL FEEL WHEN YOU HAVE:

- Bi-Weekly LIVE access to an expert on pain management and Hypermobility, who also happens to have Hypermobility herself
- Forever access to 10 weeks of training and all the related resources
- A step-by-step guide to managing your symptoms and reducing your pain.
- PLUS, exclusive lifetime access to our Hypermobility Solution Facebook community.
- The ability to take back control of your life.

Why other systems failed

- They didn't educate you on what is causing your symptoms.
- They didn't set realistic goals, and you lost motivation.
- There wasn't a tracking system in place to monitor progress.
- They don't have the medical background to create a refined system.
- They focused too much on strength training and not enough on balance.
- They don't know what it's like actually to HAVE hypermobility.

START YOUR JOURNEY

Hypermobility Solution

What if you could live without the pain and limitations of your hypermobility?

All while virtually supported by me, an expert on hypermobility and other complex conditions, along with a thriving community that has experienced many of the same symptoms and experiences that you have, too.

Ready to Live Pain-Free?

Join the Program Today

When you enroll during this special, limited-time launch period, you'll get...

- ✓ Bi-Weekly LIVE access to an expert on pain management and Hypermobility, who also happens to have Hypermobility herself
- ✓ Forever access to 10 weeks of training and all the related resources
- ✓ A step-by-step guide to managing your symptoms and reducing your pain.
- ✓ PLUS, exclusive lifetime access to our Hypermobility Solution Facebook community.
- ✓ The ability to take back control of your life.

Total Value: \$3,700

You can get all this TODAY at our special launch price:

Total Value: \$197

This single payment is even less than two average PT appointments.

Even less than a gym membership for only a couple of months. Isn't it worth it?

Ready to Live Pain-Free?

[Join the program today](#)

