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Weekly Fit Tip

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MAKE EVERY REP COUNT

Let's face it; time and energy are valuable commodities these days. If you're going to take the time to workout, you might as well make the most of it. There are simple things you can do while strength training to ensure that you make every rep count with an efficient and effective routine.

Check out some of these tips from the exercise experts at [Life Fitness](#):

Use good form. Good form is crucial to building muscle, not to mention staying injury-free. You should be standing tall, with your chest up, shoulder blades retracted and your arms naturally at your side. Don't hunch over or hold tension in your neck, and keep your abs tight to protect your lower back. If you have questions about form, you may consider hiring a personal trainer for a few sessions.

Use muscle, not momentum. Make your muscles do the work. You'll activate more muscle fibers if you lift and lower weights intentionally through your whole range of motion. If you cannot lift a weight without swinging it, it is too heavy and you should lessen the amount of weight you are lifting.

Work multi-muscle groups. One of the most efficient ways to build muscle is to incorporate compound exercises (exercises that work more than one muscle group at a time) into your routine. For example, a walking lunge is a compound exercise that requires use of multiple muscle groups: quads, glutes, hip flexors and hamstrings. Throw in a bicep curl as you do each lunge and now you are also working your biceps. Try out the [Dual Adjustable Pulley Cable Motion](#) machine at your gym. There are many ways to incorporate the upper and lower body with this machine, like a wood chop move – squat as you take the cable from high to low and rotate through your core.

Feel it. If you're whipping through 15 reps and not feeling anything, you aren't working hard enough. Adjust the weight you are using so that after 12-15 reps you are feeling muscle fatigue. Learn to pay attention to your body – it's important to understand the difference between pain and muscle fatigue. Pain is "Ouch that hurts." Muscle fatigue is "Wow, my muscles are tired. I can only do a few more."

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