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Physical exercise and women's health: functional training, weight training, and pelvic floor rehabilitation.

Exercício físico e saúde da mulher: treinamento funcional, musculação e reabilitação do assoalho pélvico

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ABSTRACT
Women's health has been widely discussed in recent decades due to epidemiological, demographic, and social transformations that directly influence women's quality of life. In this context, regular physical exercise plays a fundamental role in disease prevention, health promotion, and maintaining functionality throughout different stages of life. The physiological particularities of women, especially those related to hormonal fluctuations, body composition, and reproductive events, require specific training approaches capable of meeting the individual demands of each woman. This study aims to analyze the benefits of functional training, weight training, and pelvic floor rehabilitation for women's health, considering aspects related to hormonal physiology, metabolic health, pregnancy, the postpartum period, menopause, and aging. The research is based on... This qualitative literature review, based on national and international scientific literature published up to 2023, demonstrates that the systematic practice of physical exercise promotes significant physiological adaptations, contributing to weight control, improved body composition, prevention of metabolic diseases, musculoskeletal strengthening, and maintenance of pelvic floor function. Furthermore, scientific evidence indicates that appropriately prescribed training programs can reduce menopause-related symptoms, improve cardiovascular health, prevent urinary incontinence, and increase quality of life. It is also observed that the integration of functional training, weight training, and specific pelvic floor exercises constitutes an effective strategy for promoting women's health throughout the life cycle. Therefore, it is concluded that physical exercise is an indispensable therapeutic and preventive tool for maintaining women's overall health.
Keywords: Women's health. Physical exercise. Weight training. Functional training. Pelvic floor. Menopause.

RESUMO
A saúde da mulher tem sido amplamente discutida nas últimas décadas em razão das transformações epidemiológicas, demográficas e sociais que influenciam diretamente a qualidade de vida feminina. Nesse contexto, a prática regular de exercícios físicos desempenha um papel fundamental na prevenção de doenças, na promoção da saúde e na manutenção da funcionalidade ao longo das diferentes fases da vida. As particularidades fisiológicas femininas, especialmente as relacionadas às oscilações hormonais, à composição corporal e aos eventos reprodutivos, exigem abordagens específicas de treinamento capazes de atender às demandas individuais de cada mulher. O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar os benefícios do treinamento funcional, da musculação e da reabilitação do assoalho pélvico para a saúde feminina, considerando aspectos relacionados à fisiologia hormonal, à saúde metabólica, à gestação, ao puerpério, à menopausa e ao envelhecimento. A pesquisa fundamenta-se em revisão bibliográfica de caráter qualitativo, com base na literatura científica nacional e internacional publicada até 2023. Os resultados encontrados demonstram que a prática sistemática de exercícios físicos promove adaptações fisiológicas significativas, contribuindo para o controle do peso corporal, a melhora da composição corporal, a prevenção de doenças metabólicas, o fortalecimento musculoesquelético e a manutenção da funcionalidade pélvica. Além disso, evidências científicas indicam que programas de treinamento

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adequadamente prescritos podem reduzir sintomas relacionados à menopausa, melhorar a saúde cardiovascular, prevenir a incontinência urinária e aumentar a qualidade de vida. Observa-se, ainda, que a integração entre treinamento funcional, musculação e exercícios específicos para o assoalho pélvico constitui uma estratégia eficaz para promover a saúde feminina ao longo de todo o ciclo vital. Dessa forma, conclui-se que o exercício físico constitui uma ferramenta terapêutica e preventiva indispensável para a manutenção da saúde integral da mulher.
Palavras-chave: Saúde da mulher. Exercício físico. Musculação. Treinamento funcional. Assoalho pélvico. Menopausa.

1 INTRODUCTION

The practice of physical exercise has been recognized by the scientific community as one of the most effective non-pharmacological interventions for promoting health and preventing chronic diseases. In the case of women, the benefits are even greater. relevant due to specific physiological characteristics associated with hormonal fluctuations, to processes reproductive and to the aging. These particularities influence directly impacts body composition, energy metabolism, cardiovascular health, and musculoskeletal function, requiring individualized approaches in prescribing physical exercise.

Throughout the different phases of life, women undergo important biological transitions, such as puberty, pregnancy, the postpartum period, and menopause. Each of these stages presents specific physiological demands that can significantly impact physical and emotional health. In this context, modalities such as weight training, functional training, and exercises focused on strengthening the pelvic floor have demonstrated significant results in preventing health problems, maintaining functional independence, and improving quality of life.

Beyond the aesthetic benefits often associated with physical exercise, recent studies point to positive effects on metabolic, cardiovascular, hormonal, and psychological parameters. Therefore, understanding the relationship between physical activity and women's health becomes fundamental for physical education professionals, physiotherapists, doctors, and other professionals involved in the comprehensive care of the female population. This article seeks to discuss... The main scientific evidence on the subject, highlighting the impacts of functional training, weight training, and pelvic floor rehabilitation in the different phases of a woman's life.

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2 METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a narrative literature review, with a qualitative approach and descriptive nature. The choice of this methodology is based on the need to gather, analyze, and discuss scientific evidence on the influence of physical exercise on women's health at different stages of the life cycle.

National and international databases were consulted, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, MEDLINE, and Google Scholar. The selection of materials was carried out using the descriptors "women's health", "physical exercise", "strength training", "functional training", "pelvic floor", "pregnancy exercise", "menopause" and "metabolic health good as of their Portuguese equivalents.

Inclusion criteria included scientific articles, books, clinical guidelines, and institutional documents published up to 2023 that were relevant to the topics covered. Duplicate studies, works without peer review, and publications not directly related to the proposed objectives were excluded.

After selection, the content was organized into thematic categories related to female hormonal physiology, functional training, weight training, pelvic floor, and exercise during... pregnancy and the postpartum period, menopause and Metabolic health. A The data analysis consisted of a critical interpretation of the evidence found, with the aim of identifying scientific consensus and relevant contributions to professional practice.

3 PHYSIOLOGY HORMONAL FEMALE AND ANSWERS TO THE PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Female hormonal physiology has a direct influence on health and body composition. Body composition, physical performance, and adaptations to training. Unlike men, women experience cyclical hormonal variations primarily resulting from the interaction between the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and ovaries. The hormones estrogen and progesterone play fundamental roles in regulating metabolism, reproduction, bone health, and maintenance. of the tissues muscular. According to Guyton and Hall (2021), these oscillations Hormonal changes affect various physiological systems, making it necessary to understand female specificities for the proper prescription of physical exercise. Therefore, healthcare professionals should consider hormonal particularities when planning training programs specifically for women.

THE cycle menstrual and one of the main factors physiological what influence to the answers to the

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Physical exercise. During the follicular phase, there is a progressive increase in estrogen levels. hormone associate the improvement from the sensitivity the insulin, of metabolism lipid and muscle recovery. In the luteal phase, characterized by increased progesterone, changes in body temperature, increased perception of fatigue, and modifications in the use of energy substrates may occur. According to McNulty et al. (2020), although there are significant individual variations, some women report differences in physical performance throughout the menstrual cycle, especially in high-intensity and long-duration exercises.

THE estrogen exercises important action anabolic indirect, contributing to the preservation of the mass muscular and to the protection against processes Inflammatory. Several studies point that hormone favors the recovery muscular after exercises intense and assists in maintenance of bone mineral density (Kraemer; Ratamess, 2004). Furthermore, estrogen has cardioprotective effects by promoting a better lipid profile and greater elasticity. vascular. These characteristics help explain some of the differences observed between men and women in the development of certain cardiovascular diseases during reproductive age. Another relevant aspect refers to the interaction between physical exercise and the endocrine system. A practice regular of exercises promotes adaptations hormonal what improve the metabolic balance and reduce you factors of risk to illnesses chronicles. Training resisted and aerobics they can increase the sensitivity the insulin, reduce markers inflammatory and to favor the regulation hormonal in women with conditions as syndrome of the ovaries Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), obesity, and insulin resistance. According to Teede et al. (2018), physical exercise constitutes one of main strategies no pharmacological to the management from the PCOS, contributing to the improvement of metabolic and reproductive parameters.

Hormonal changes throughout a woman's life also directly influence... Response to physical training. During menopause, the reduction in estrogen levels is associated with increased body fat, loss of muscle mass, and decreased bone density. In this context, physical exercise becomes an essential tool to mitigate the effects of aging. hormonal. THE scientific literature demonstrates that Structured strength training and functional training programs can significantly reduce the impacts of these changes, promoting greater functional autonomy and quality of life in women of different age groups.

4 BODYBUILDING TO WOMEN AND ADAPTATIONS NEUROMUSCULAR

THE bodybuilding he has been widely recognized as one of modalities more effective to

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To promote women's health. Although for decades it has been predominantly associated with the male public, contemporary scientific evidence demonstrates that strength training... offers benefits expressive to women of all to the ages. Second the positioning of American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM, 2021), the resistance training contributes to the increase from the strength muscular, the improvement from the composition bodily, The prevention of chronic diseases and the maintenance of functionality throughout aging.

adaptations neuromuscular arising from the bodybuilding involve, initially, gains related to recruitment and to the synchronization of motor units. As described by Fleck and Kraemer (2017), in the first weeks of training, big part of increase of the force occurs of adaptations neural same before of development significant of hypertrophy muscular. That phenomenon and particularly important to women beginners, allowing for rapid improvements in functional capacity and the performance of daily activities.

Muscle hypertrophy in women presents specific characteristics resulting from hormonal differences between the sexes. Although testosterone levels are lower than those observed in men, studies show that women respond positively to resistance training when subjected to appropriately structured programs (Westcott, 2012). Increased muscle mass promotes benefits that go beyond aesthetics, including improved basal metabolism, greater joint stability, reduced risk of falls, and prevention of age-related sarcopenia.

Another significant benefit of weight training relates to bone health. Osteoporosis is a major public health concern for aging women, especially after menopause. Exercises resisted generate stimuli mechanics what favor the training bone and help preserve bone mineral density. According to Guadalupe-Grau et al. (2009), physically active women have a lower incidence of osteoporotic fractures than sedentary women, which reinforces the importance of strength training as a preventive strategy.

In addition to physical benefits, weight training has a positive impact on psychological and emotional aspects. Research indicates an association between resistance training and a reduction in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. It also improves self-esteem and... Body image and self-confidence have also been frequently reported among practitioners. Therefore, weight training should be understood as a multidimensional tool for promoting women's health, contributing simultaneously to physical, mental, and social well-being.

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5 TRAINING FUNCTIONAL AND CAPACITY FUNCTIONAL FEMALE

Functional training is characterized by exercises that replicate movements present in daily life activities, promoting the integrated development of physical abilities. Unlike traditional approaches that emphasize isolated muscle groups, functional training prioritizes movement patterns that involve multiple muscles. joints and chains muscular. Second Boyle (2016), that methodology he has with the goal of improving motor efficiency, body stability, and overall functionality of the individual.

For the female population, functional training offers advantages related to Improved mobility, motor coordination, balance, and muscular endurance. These abilities are fundamental not only for athletic performance but also for the safe execution of daily activities. Women undergoing functional training programs frequently show improvements in posture, trunk stability, and neuromuscular control, factors directly related to the prevention of musculoskeletal injuries.

Core strengthening is one of the main components of functional training. The central musculature of the body, composed of abdominal, lumbar, diaphragm, and pelvic floor muscles, plays an essential role in stabilizing the spine and efficiently transferring forces between body segments. According to Kibler, Press, and Sciascia (2006), adequate core activation contributes significantly to movement efficiency and reduces the risk of injury.

Another relevant aspect concerns the applicability of functional training in different phases of a woman's life. Pregnant women, postpartum women, adults, and elderly women can benefit from this modality when the activities are properly adapted to their individual conditions. Studies demonstrate that functional programs promote improvements in overall physical fitness, favoring the maintenance of functional independence and quality of life during aging (Cadore; Izquierdo, 2013).

Additionally, the training functional it presents high capacity of promote adhesion to the practice of physical exercise. The diversity of movements, the possibility of individualized progressions, and the practical application of the exercises contribute to greater motivation and engagement among participants. Considering the challenges of sedentary lifestyles among women observed worldwide, strategies what favor the accession to the exercise physical they are of big importance for public health.

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6 ANATOMY, FUNCTION AND REHABILITATION DO FLOOR PELVIC

The pelvic floor is a complex muscular and fascial system responsible for supporting the pelvic organs, including the bladder, uterus, and rectum. This structure plays fundamental roles related to urinary and fecal continence, visceral support, lumbopelvic stability, and sexual function. According to Bø and Berghmans (2018), the proper functioning of the pelvic floor muscles is essential for maintaining women's quality of life, especially during pregnancy, childbirth, and aging.

The anatomy of the pelvic floor is primarily composed of the levator muscles. The anus and coccygeus muscles work together to support the pelvic structures. Alterations in these muscles can result in dysfunctions such as urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, and chronic pelvic pain. The prevalence of these conditions increases with age and can be aggravated by factors such as obesity, multiparity, sedentary lifestyle, and physiological aging.

During pregnancy and childbirth, the pelvic floor undergoes significant biomechanical adaptations. The increase in intra-abdominal pressure, associated with hormonal changes and fetal growth, can compromise the muscular and ligamentous integrity of the region. Studies show that women who perform specific pelvic floor training during pregnancy have a lower incidence of urinary incontinence during the gestational period and in the postpartum period. postpartum (Woodley et al., 2020).

Pelvic floor rehabilitation is primarily based on the practice of specific exercises aimed at strengthening the muscles. The exercises originally described by Kegel remain widely used due to their proven effectiveness. In addition, resources such as biofeedback, electrostimulation, and integrated functional training have been incorporated into modern therapeutic programs. According to Dumoulin, Cacciari, and Hay-Smith (2018), pelvic floor muscle training constitutes a first-line treatment for female urinary incontinence.

In recent years, physical education professionals have played an increasingly important role in promoting women's pelvic health. The integration of functional exercises, weight training, and specific strengthening of the pelvic floor allows for more comprehensive preventive approaches. This multidisciplinary approach favors not only the rehabilitation of dysfunctions that are already established, but also the prevention of future changes resulting from aging and reproductive events.

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7 EXERCISE PHYSICAL NA GESTATION And no Postpartum

Pregnancy is a period marked by profound physiological, biomechanical, and hormonal transformations. psychological factors that significantly impact the Women's health. These adaptations are necessary to ensure fetal development and prepare the mother's body for childbirth. and the breast-feeding. Nonetheless, such changes they can increase the occurrence of Musculoskeletal discomfort, metabolic changes, and functional limitations are common causes of pregnancy. In this context, regular physical exercise emerges as an important strategy to promote maternal and fetal health. According to the guidelines of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2020), women with low-risk pregnancies should be encouraged to remain physically active throughout their pregnancy.

Cardiovascular adaptations observed during pregnancy include increased plasma volume, elevated cardiac output, and changes in resting heart rate. These changes increase the capacity of transport of oxygen to to meet to the demands Maternal and fetal health. Regular moderate aerobic exercise contributes to improved cardiovascular efficiency, reduced risk of gestational hypertension, and helps control weight gain. Studies by Davenport et al. (2018) demonstrate that physically active pregnant women have a lower incidence of gestational diabetes mellitus and pre-eclampsia compared to sedentary women.

Resistance training also offers significant benefits during pregnancy. When properly supervised, it contributes to maintaining muscle strength, improving joint stability, and reducing lower back pain frequently associated with pregnancy. Furthermore, strengthening the trunk stabilizer muscles helps support postural changes resulting from abdominal growth. According to Barakat et al. (2019), training programs that combine aerobic and resistance exercises show positive results for maternal health without increasing obstetric risks.

Another relevant aspect concerns the preparation of the pelvic floor muscles during pregnancy. The progressive increase in intra-abdominal pressure and hormonal changes can compromise the function of these muscles. Specific pelvic floor strengthening exercises contribute to reducing the incidence of gestational and postpartum urinary incontinence, as well as promoting functional recovery after the baby's birth. Evidence presented by Woodley et al. (2020) indicates that women who perform regular pelvic floor training have better functional outcomes in the postpartum period.

THE postpartum and one phase of recovery physical and of adaptation to the new demands from the

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maternity. During this period, physical exercise can help restore muscle strength, in improvement from the composition bodily and in reduction of the symptoms depressed associated with the postpartum period. However, the resumption of activities must respect individual clinical conditions and the recovery of tissues involved in childbirth. The scientific literature highlights that progressive physical exercise programs, combined with strengthening of the pelvic floor... and the strengthening of the deep abdominal muscles, promote a more efficient and safe recovery of female functionality after pregnancy.

8 MENOPAUSE, AGING AND HEALTH METABOLIC FEMALE

Menopause is a natural biological transition characterized by the permanent cessation of ovarian function and a significant reduction in estrogen production. This phase marks the end of a woman's reproductive life and is associated with several physiological changes that directly impact health and quality of life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), the increase in life expectancy means that many Women spend more than a third of their lives in the post-menopausal period, making it essential to develop strategies aimed at promoting healthy aging.

Among the main changes observed during menopause are the progressive loss of muscle mass, increased body fat, reduced bone mineral density, and metabolic changes. The drop in estrogen levels is directly related to the redistribution of body fat, which favors the accumulation of adipose tissue in the abdominal region. This phenomenon increases the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and metabolic syndrome. As described by Lovejoy et al. (2008), these changes represent significant challenges for global public health.

Strength training has been identified as one of the most effective interventions to mitigate the negative effects of aging in women. Resistance training provides mechanical stimuli capable of preserving muscle mass, increasing strength, and reducing the effects of sarcopenia. Furthermore, it contributes to maintaining bone mineral density, reducing the risk of osteopenia and osteoporosis. According to Peterson, Sen, and Gordon (2011), women undergoing regular strength training programs show significant gains in muscle mass and functional improvements even at advanced ages.

Physical exercise also plays a key role in women's metabolic health. The practice regular improvement the sensitivity the insulin, favors the control glycemic and contributes for the reduction from the fat visceral. Studies conducted put Colberg et al. (2016) demonstrate what

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Aerobic and resistance exercises produce complementary effects in the prevention and treatment of metabolic disorders. Furthermore, physical activity helps control cholesterol and triglyceride levels, reducing risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases.

The benefits of physical exercise during menopause are not limited to physiological aspects. Several studies report positive effects on vasomotor symptoms, sleep quality, mental health, and overall well-being. Physically active women show lower rates of anxiety, depression, and cognitive impairment than sedentary women. Therefore, regular physical exercise should be considered a central strategy for promoting the overall health of women in aging, contributing to greater autonomy, functional independence, and quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the available scientific evidence demonstrates that physical exercise occupies a central position. in promotion from the health female in all to the phases from the life. To the particularities Biological characteristics of a woman's body require specific training approaches. capable of meeting the physiological demands arising from hormonal fluctuations, reproductive events, and the natural aging process. In this context, the integration between weight training, training functional and strengthening of floor pelvic presents itself as a comprehensive and scientifically sound strategy.

Understanding female hormonal physiology is fundamental to developing more effective and individualized exercise programs. Sex hormones significantly influence body composition, energy metabolism, muscle recovery, and... bone health. Therefore, understanding these interactions allows healthcare professionals to develop interventions that are better suited to the specific needs of women at different stages of life.

Weight training stands out as one of the most efficient methods for maintaining women's musculoskeletal health. Its benefits include increased muscle strength, preservation of lean mass, improved bone mineral density, and reduced risks associated with sarcopenia and osteoporosis. Furthermore, regular resistance training contributes to improved self-esteem, functional autonomy, and quality of life.

Functional training, in turn, offers benefits related to improving functional capacity. from the coordination motor, of balance and from the stability bodily. Your applicability

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The suitability of this modality for different age groups and physiological conditions makes it an important tool for promoting women's health. The emphasis on integrated movements and functional motor patterns facilitates the performance of daily activities and reduces the risk of injury.

Pelvic floor health is another essential component of comprehensive women's health care. Scientific literature shows that specific exercises for these muscles significantly contribute to the prevention and treatment of dysfunctions such as urinary incontinence, prolapses, and functional impairments related to pregnancy and aging. Incorporating these exercises into physical training programs amplifies the benefits obtained by those who practice them.

During pregnancy and the postpartum period, physical exercise has great clinical relevance. In addition to contributing to weight control and metabolic health, it helps reduce pregnancy complications, improves physical conditioning, and promotes postpartum recovery. Current evidence reinforces that supervised exercise is safe and recommended for most pregnant women without medical contraindications.

During menopause and aging, physical activity takes on an even more important role given the hormonal and metabolic changes characteristic of this phase. Maintaining regular exercise programs helps preserve muscle mass, control the accumulation of body fat, improve cardiovascular health, and reduce the risk of chronic non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, it promotes the maintenance of functional independence and quality of life.

In conclusion, physical exercise should be understood not only as a practice aimed at physical conditioning or body aesthetics, but also as a highly relevant therapeutic and preventive intervention for women's health. The adoption of individualized programs, based on scientific evidence and conducted by qualified professionals, represents an essential strategy for promoting well-being, functionality, and longevity for women.

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