

Coffee adds strength to ageing muscles

By: PT1

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London: Elderly people who regularly drink coffee are more likely to maintain their strength and reduce their chances of falling and injuring themselves, a new study has claimed.

It's known that muscle strength declines as we age and it can reduce quality of life. Although the process is not well understood, it is clear that preserving muscle tone is key.

In the new study, researchers at Coventry University looked for the first time at whether caffeine could also have a strengthening effect on pensioners. Their study on mice revealed that caffeine boosted power in two different muscles in elderly adults — an effect that was not seen in developing youngsters. "With the importance of maintaining a physically active lifestyle to preserve health and functional capacity, the performance-enhancing benefit of caffeine could prove beneficial in the ageing population," Jason Tallis, who led the study, was quoted.

In the study, the researchers isolated muscles from mice ranging in age from juvenile to elderly, then tested their performance before and after caffeine treatment. The stimulant is found in coffee and a number of soft drinks. They looked at two different skeletal muscles, which are the muscles we can control voluntarily. The first was the diaphragm, a core muscle used for respiration; the second was a leg muscle called the extensor digitorum longus (EDL), used for locomotion.

"Despite a reduced effect in the elderly, caffeine may still provide performance-enhancing benefits," Tallis said.

Consuming caffeine has also been linked to improved thinking processes and improved memory skills in later life.

However, previous research has shown that excessive caffeine intake may cause the body to rid itself of calcium — a nutrient vital in supporting bone strength in later life.
