

Ann B.

SUCCESS STORY!

Customer

Ann B., a 75-year-old retired nurse.

Challenge

Ann was losing strength in her legs and hands and could no longer stand up without using her arms for support.

Greysteel Solution

Barbell training twice a week.

The program includes squats, deadlifts, bench press, overhead press, bodyweight pull-ups and high-intensity interval training on the bicycle.



The doctor and the nurse.



Is it Ann or SuperAnn?

STANDING UP TO ACTING OLD:

A senior citizen uses barbell training to reverse the life-limiting affects of weakness

For 4 years, Ann B., a 75-year-old retired nurse, hardly talked about what her son Brad, an assistant professor of classical studies, was doing in his shed in Virginia. Ann *did* talk to Brad about what was happening in her metro Detroit kitchen – getting things off the bottom shelf *and getting back up* wasn't so easy anymore. Standing up from kneeling down, her legs felt weak and she had to use her arms to pull herself up.

“I knew from working as a nurse that weakness in the legs is a bad sign for senior citizens.”

-Ann

Telling Brad about weak legs changed Ann's life...eventually. Brad's shed was for barbell training and from experience, he knew getting strong could help his mom. Ann started getting articles and hints from her son - about strength training for seniors, about this doctor up the street who coached barbell training. In her whole life, Ann hadn't joined a gym and she never heard of women doing weight training. But Brad, who for so long said nothing about it, gently persisted once Ann told him about her standing up problem.

Ann loves to travel, she's got a busy life with friends and 2 lively grandkids whose energy can only be handled by the great outdoors. Losing her physical abilities is not compatible with this lifestyle and she knew she had to stop the process of getting weaker.

Finding the right strength coach

But she didn't want to join a conventional gym because she was worried about getting injured. Brad told her, “You live within 8 miles of the best coach in the country for people your age, go see Sully.”

Sully is Dr. Jonathon Sullivan, an emergency physician, physiologist, Starting Strength coach and former marine. He treats patients, teaches at a Level 1 Trauma Centre in Detroit and he coaches people in their 40s to 90s at his barbell gym, Greysteel Strength and Conditioning in Farmington.

It was Sully's non-barbell credentials that made sense to Ann. “Sully's a doctor, he's not going to hurt me and if I do get hurt, he'll know what to do,” Ann said about her decision to start barbell training with Sully.

Giving a broomstick the benefit of the doubt

When Ann walked into Greysteel, she wasn't intimidated by the power racks because she had no idea what they were for. Her first session started with an interview with Sully and finished with squatting a broomstick. It wasn't very comfortable but she trusted Sully. “I felt safe in this environment,” Ann said.

Ann B.

That broomstick started Ann's career as a masters athlete and she's trained Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 am ever since.

Ann didn't notice any benefits from the barbell training for the first month or two. But she kept coming back because she's no quitter. "If I commit to something, I'm going to do it," Ann says.

Strength: opening the doors to life

She kept doing it and it changed her life. The first thing she noticed was hand strength. The laundry detergent bottle has a great big cap and Ann couldn't open it by herself – she used the vice in the basement to loosen it. Now she uses her hands. It seems like a small thing but for Ann, living alone, it makes a big difference.

Ann knows she's stronger and she feels better about life. And it turns out, she likes barbell training and 'throwing all this weight on your back' but the benefits aren't just physical, like dropping two sizes in her slacks without losing weight.

Ann sees that barbell training is a lot like life: if you show up and do the work, you get stronger. It's not easy. For Ann, the hardest part about training is taking care of her nutrition and eating 150 grams of protein a day. Forever. She still has trouble but she does it by eating the same thing every day, including choking down her protein shake. It's easier on training days though because by the time Ann leaves Greysteel, she's starving and will eat anything.

"The actual training, where you're continually progressing – it opens your mind," Ann says. "As you get older, you aren't sure there are many doors left to open. But with this, you realize all the doors aren't shut and there are still opportunities to do things and continue growing."

Ann's friends think she's crazy lifting weights 'at her age'. But she's stronger than all of them and she laughs about it.

And she doesn't worry about her bottom cupboards anymore...if she needs something down there, she just gets it and springs right back up.

Barbells: the new family tradition

What started in a shed in Virginia is now a family affair across 3 states. A month after Ann began her career as a masters athlete, her daughter and son-in-law built a gym in their basement, started lifting weights and now see a Starting Strength coach in California for coaching.

"This was the best decision I've ever made – to do something for myself and feel better."

-Ann

Ann's barbell training started in February 2016 at age 74 and she's not done. Ann currently squats 140 pounds and lifts 167 pounds off the floor but her next big goal is a 200-pound deadlift.

**Ann's personal records are as of March 2017. She will keep breaking them.*

Results

Stronger legs and hands.

Ann started lifting 25 lbs off the ground and one year later, deadlifts 167 lbs.

Smaller waist without losing weight.

Feels better about life.

Passed the barbell experience to her adult daughter.

Ann can now stand up with 140 pounds on her back.



Ann way back at the start of her barbell career.



One strong family: Ann, her daughter, Laura and son, Brad trained with Sully during a family visit.



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