

Val R.

SUCCESS STORY!

Customer

Val R., a petite 67-year old woman with an active lifestyle.

Challenge

Lingering back pain since an injury in 2010.

Diagnosed with osteopenia, (decreased bone density).



Val deadlifting.

WALKING TALL AND STANDING TALL:

Barbell training reverses osteopenia diagnosis in 67-year-old woman

Val R., a 67-year-old retiree, never sat still a day in her life. A graduate of George Mason University, Val's been married for 46 years, takes care of the house, the lake house, the garden, 3 adorable pugs and worked 12-hour days in facilities management before retiring to take care of her mom for six years. Val's life is on-the-go and it's just as well; 7 years ago, she hurt her back helping her mom out of the tub. The pain has lingered ever since and it flares up after sitting.

Even with the flare-ups, and weighing a scant 107 pounds, Val never thought of herself as weak. She was seeing it in the family circle though. Her sister, Chris, couldn't get out of the car by herself. Her brother-in-law, Carson, had trouble lifting things, including himself out of a chair. Val's husband, John, hurt more and more from a back injury he got in 1975 and relied on a cane to get around.

The strong shall survive (and get out of the car)

Then something unusual happened; Chris got spry and now gets around like a champ. And Carson went from barely standing up to standing up and pulling 330 pounds off the floor.

"My brother-in-law started telling us about barbell training and his coach, Sully. We could see the progress Carson was making and he kept saying, 'look at what it's done for me'."

-Val

In February 2015, Val and John went to Greysteel Strength and Conditioning to watch Carson train and by the end of the session, John said to Val, "This is something we need to do. Let's go together."

Val doesn't need any convincing to get more active. A while back, she joined one of those big box gyms. It was the kind of place where the guys stood around watching the women and that made her too uneasy to stick around for long.

Val R.

Greysteel Solution

A two-day per week barbell program including squats, deadlifts, press, bench press, and pull-ups.



Val using the standing press to get strong.



Val worked hard for these biceps.



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Scared straight: Val sees her future as a weak woman

But she didn't hesitate about Greysteel and four days later, she was at the gym, getting assessed by Dr. Jonathon Sullivan, emergency physician and Starting Strength barbell coach. She got a real surprise that day.

"I never thought of myself as being weak but Sully quickly showed me how weak I was. He put his hand on my back and I'll never forget the stricken look on his face when he told me I had no muscle on my back, just skin over bone."

-Val

Sully clearly painted the medical picture of how miserable the end of Val's life would be if she didn't gain muscle and strength. Even though she was already diagnosed with osteopenia, the repercussions didn't hit home until that day with Sully. "I *did* get scared straight. I was absolutely in total shock," Val recalls.

Lifting, eating and progressing become Val's new normal

Val and John started training together with Sully, every Monday and Friday at 12:30 pm. Val took to barbell training right away partly because she loves a challenge. The biggest part of the challenge—more so than the actual lifts—was Sully's insistence that she eat 120 grams of protein a day and gain 10 pounds to fuel her progress in the gym. Val spent her life eating bread and vegetables and before her life as a masters athlete, breakfast was a bagel and a diet coke.

She doesn't do that anymore; now she shocks the waiter at the local steakhouse by polishing off a 12-ounce steak by herself.

Val *did* gain ten pounds and a whole lot more. Doing squats helped her back and she feels so good all the time. Her clothes look better and she's now got a 'cute, little round butt' which powers her squats and deadlifts. Currently, this 67-year-old former skinny-mini can squat 125 pounds, deadlift 150 pounds and she's just done her first unassisted pull-up after working on it for over a year.

Barbell training even makes visiting the dentist better – after all, before her check-up, the dentist and hygienist take a minute to tell her she looks great. It's hard to know exactly what they're noticing but Val has more confidence and much better posture. "I walk tall and stand tall. Barbell training makes me look and feel younger," she says.

Val R.

Results

Greatly reduced back pain.

Increased bodyweight by 10 pounds.

Smaller waist size.

Clothes fit better and Val feels so good all the time.

No more osteopenia.



Val takes iron for back pain.

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



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Building bone mass at 67 and having the time of her life

It also turned back time in her medical file. That diagnosis of osteopenia she got a couple of years ago? It's removed from her medical file *because she just doesn't have it anymore.*

Val loves the time she and John spend in the gym with Sully. "I'm a true believer. I'm a stronger and more vital person because of Sully's coaching," Val says. She appreciates Sully's enthusiasm—he celebrates her PRs like he got them himself—and his medical background.

"Sully provides a beautiful marriage of talent, skill and knowledge to improve life for his master athletes. He's also a genius, a real brainiac and we have a blast. It's the highlight of our week."

-Val on why she keeps training at Greysteel

Val's also very goal-oriented. When Val first met Sully, he told her she was 'going to be an athlete' and she broke out laughing. She didn't get it at the time but she does now – Val *became* an athlete who eats right and achieves the goals in her training log. Sometimes she misses a rep—it makes her *so mad*—but she puts in the effort and never gives up. She just made another personal best of lifting 150 pounds off the ground for three reps.

Going for it: Val sees her future as a strong woman

Val believes her old age—whenever that starts—is now much different than it would have been without barbell training. "I'm going for the compression of morbidity and having a better life until the end because I'm strong," Val says.

Until then, you can find Val using her ever-increasing strength to enjoy the house, the lake house, the garden, 3 adorable pugs and John, her husband of 46 years.

But what about John? Is he still on a cane and can his little wife lift more weight than he can? *Get these answers and more by reading John's success story.*

Greysteel Strength and Conditioning is a Starting Strength Gym in Farmington, MI (Metro Detroit).