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## 'Powerlifting Granny' has no plans to slow down

If your New Year's resolution to get fit needs a kick in the pants or if the aches and pains of aging are getting you down, maybe Lois Hummer is all the inspiration you need.

At 82, the Geauga County woman is a grandmother to 7 and great-grandmother to 10. And by the way, she also holds 4 national powerlifting records.

Lois trains 3 days a week at Anytime Fitness in Chesterland, under the watchful eye of her trainer Nick Oskowski.

"Lois is the ultimate dynamic person. When I first met her, I was sizing her up to see what she could do. I had no idea until the very first day I got her in the gym and under the squat rack. She's a beast," says Nick.

Powerlifting wasn't even on Lois' radar until she was about 74 years old.

"I was on the treadmill and I saw somebody benching. I asked the trainer, 'What's he doing?' And he said, 'he's benching. Do you want to try?' I said, 'Sure!' And I loved it," Lois recalls.

Fitness and exercise have always been important to Lois. She has danced, biked, rollerskated and swam to keep her body strong throughout her life.

While her children have expressed some concern, Lois has the blessing of her doctor. "Keep going. Don't stop," is what Lois says her doctor told her.

She weighs about 139 pounds, and can easily deadlift 160 pounds. At a competition later this year, Lois is shooting for a new personal best, of 180 pounds.

"She will not give up. Lois will not give up. I've seen her get frustrated when she doesn't meet her mark, and I almost have to force her to get off the bench or to move away from the squat rack because she'll break for 5 seconds and want to do it again. But I love her tenacity," Nick says.

Lois says she's never injured herself powerlifting, and though she pushes her muscles, she's never sore.

Years ago, Lois broke her wrist rollerskating, and she has a permanent plate attached to her bone. "But, it doesn't bother me at all," Lois brags.

The company she keeps may have something to do with why Lois swears she'll never use a cane or walker. "I have a friend, and she's 90. And she still rollerskates. So we're in the same boat. She won't give up, and I won't give up," Lois says.

There is very little Lois can't do. Except that she can no longer drive at night.

Lois encourages other seniors to incorporate some weightlifting into their lives. Not the weights she lifts, but even some light resistance training can make a difference. "I tell them to get off their butt. Even if it's just to lift a couple of little pound weights. Fine, but move," Lois says.

"Women in general, whether they are 30, 40, 50, 60, or 70, they think of powerlifting as something you shouldn't do because of your back, because of your knees or the possibility of injury. It all comes down to technique, whether you are trained correctly, and you know how to breathe correctly. It can only benefit you by strengthening your back, strengthening those surrounding tissues and tendons around your knees. So it can only help you become more mobile as you age," explains Nick.

For Lois, there is no end in sight. She'll participate in Bench Nationals later this year, and hopes to add a new trophy to her collection. But ask this powerlifting granny to describe herself, and the answer may surprise you. "I'm a very gentle soul," she says.



Lois Hummer, 82, trains for powerlifting competitions at the Anytime Fitness club in Chesterland, Ohio.