



Cardio and Strength Training Helpful Information

CARDIO

Beginners/Intermediate

The first step is to find activity/activities that you like to do. What fits your personality? What do you feel comfortable fitting into your life? Are there things you like to do outdoors or in the gym or both? *Remember any activity will work as long as it involves a movement that gets your heart rate up.* Any exercise can be challenging if you make it that way, it's all about how hard you work. Choose something you can see yourself doing at least 3 days a week. Be flexible and don't be afraid to branch out once you get comfortable with a particular exercise.

1. **Duration**-the most important element of your workout will be how long you do it. You should work on duration before you work on anything else—it's more important to work on continuous exercise than to focus on how fast or how hard you're working.

Beginners-start with 10-20 minutes and add more time to your workouts until you are up to 30 minutes. Guidelines for a workout are 30-60 minutes most days of the week (3-6 days a week).

2. **Intensity**-Once you've gotten used to exercise (up to 30 minutes of continuous movement) start working on your intensity. How hard you work is a crucial factor in your workout.
 - a. How hard you work is directly related to how many calories you burn
 - b. Raising intensity is the best way to burn more calories in a short period of time
 - c. Easy part of your workout to change

3. Levels to use for Intensity

- a. **High Intensity Cardio**-this falls between 75-85% of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR). What this translates to is exercise at a level that feels challenging and leaves you too breathless to talk too much (3-4 words). Beginners, you will have to work up to this level. (You may feel like this when you first start working out but will change as you get).
- b. **Moderate Intensity Cardio**-this level is 60-70% of your MHR. The American College of Sports Medicine often recommends this level of intensity in its guidelines. This is the level you would typically want to shoot for in your workouts.
- c. **Low Intensity Cardio**-This exercise is considered to be 50-55% of your MHR, this is a good level to work at during your warm up/cool down or when you're squeezing in other activities, for example: a walk.
- d. With the large percentage of American's over weight it clear that many of us are not getting at least the 30 minutes of exercise a day. ***To lose weight you need to be working out 4 or more days a week AND eating healthy.***

4 Why cardio is important:

- a. Burn calories/help lose weight
- b. Make your heart strong so that it doesn't have to work hard to pump blood
- c. Increase lung capacity
- d. Reduce risk of heart attack, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes
- e. Feel good, sleep better, and reduce stress

Cardio Beginners

3x's per week for 10-20 minutes and increase the time so that you are working out continuously for 30 minutes. Once that is established you need to add intensity into your work out. That can be done by increasing speed, incline or resistance.

Cardio Intermediate

If you have been doing the same workout-it's time to increase duration, increase intensity or change up your workout-try something new. If you want to lose weight and you are currently working out 3 days a week increase the number of days.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Beginners: 12-15 reps 1-3 sets It is more important to focus on good form than heavy weights. After 6 weeks you will want to move down to 10-12 reps 3 sets.

It may take several workouts to figure out how much weight to use-especially if you are not working out on machines at the Y. (The wellness staff will establish that number for you if you work out here the 4 weeks). It's okay, you will still get a good workout. Sometimes you will need 2 different weights based on the exercises you are doing.

A rep is the number of times you do the exercise. A set is the number of times the required reps are completed. So 12 reps of bicep curls=1set.

QUICK REFERENCE TO CARDIO AND STRENGTH EXERCISES

CARDIO-walking, run, swim, bike, any YMCA fitness classes that are listed as cardio classes.

STRENGTH TRAINING-the 3 plans provided in this pdf, or the Y cybex or free weights. Any fitness classes at the YMCA that are listed as toning or mind/body.

CARDIO AND STRENGTH TRAINING - boot camp and water fitness classes are cardio and strength training.

All schedules and class descriptions at the YMCA are listed on the Get Fit webpage under Event Calendar. You can also check out their website at www.ymca-austin.org