



CARDIO TRAINING TIPS & ADVICE

WHAT IS CARDIO EXERCISE?

Cardiovascular (cardio) exercise refers to exercise that strengthens the cardiovascular system. Cardio exercise uses large muscles, usually the legs, in a rhythmic fashion. Examples are running, walking, bicycling, swimming, cross-country skiing, rowing, jumping rope, skating, and machines such as stair steppers and elliptical trainers.

HOW SHOULD I WARM UP?

The best way to warm up for cardio exercise is to start out doing the same exercise you are going to use for the workout at an easy pace for a few minutes. Then launch into a regular intensity workout. For example, if you're going out for a run, start with easy jogging, or even walking, depending on your fitness level. You may need a longer warm-up in the morning or in cold weather.

WHICH WORKOUT IS BEST?

The effectiveness of cardio workouts depends on intensity and duration. As long as you get your heart rate into a training zone, any form of cardio workout will have the same effectiveness if maintained for the same time. So you can use any type of exercise you enjoy, or go from one aerobic workout mode, or one machine, to another. No type of aerobic exercise is inherently better than the others. Your heart doesn't know the difference.

WORKING OUT IN SHORT SETS

People all the time tell me that when you workout with weights you are not doing any Cardio. I say this is untrue! Next time you decide to workout, pick 3 or 4 exercises and only do 1 set of each, giving yourself 25-30 seconds of rest between each different exercise set. After you have done all 3 or 4 exercises once, do 50 jumping jacks then rest for a minute or so. Do this routine 4 or 5 times for your workout (should take about 40-50 minutes) and you will be breathing very heavily. That will also mean that you are getting cardiorespiratory exercise and a stellar heart workout.

AM I RUNNING/WALKING TOO FAST?

In general when you run or walk, you do not always want to be pushing yourself to the absolute maximum of your fitness/cardiorespiratory ability. If you're trying to run/walk to stay in good shape and have good heart health, a good test is called the 'Talk Test'. If while running/walking you can still talk and carry on a conversation with little difficulty, you are running/walking at a good pace. If you are running/walking so hard that you have great difficulty speaking, maybe tone it down a little bit; and if carrying on a conversation is easy, push yourself a little bit more.

DO HIGHER INTENSITIES BURN MORE CALORIES?

Although you burn a higher percentage of fat calories at slow and moderate cardio intensities, you burn more total calories, and more total fat calories, when you exercise at higher intensities. You may choose to work out longer and/or slower for various reasons, but never slow down just because you think that's necessary to be in a "fat burning zone."