

**Want to look and feel your best? Then the combo of strength training and cardio conditioning is key. Cardio is like strength training for your heart and lungs!**

## What is the best cardio exercise???

Cardiovascular exercise is simply any activity that raises your heart rate to a level where you're working, but can still talk. There is no 'best' cardio exercise...anything that gets you moving and your heart rate up is great! Here are two bits of advice:

- ✓ Do something you can see yourself doing at least 3 times a week.
- ✓ Go with variety. You don't have to do the same thing every time...change it up!

## How long should you exercise???

After you choose what type exercise you want to do, you need to figure out how long you do it for. The most important thing is **YOUR TIME**. One hour is NOT better than    hour if it means your exercising becomes an inconvenience! **Use whatever time you can devote.**



If you're a beginner, start slow, a few minutes, adding more time to each workout until you're up to 30 minutes. Most people find 30-45 minutes to be a realistic balance. Here's some tips to help you fit cardio exercise into your life:

- ✓ Do mini-workouts throughout the day
- ✓ Do those daily things that **DO** make a difference: take the stairs, walk more, stop driving just around the block, etc.
- ✓ People who workout regularly do **NOT** have any more free time than people who don't!!! They have just learned prioritize their time and make exercise important on their daily list.
- ✓ A good personal trainer makes a **BIG** difference in motivation goal-setting and accountability.
- ✓ If you make exercise a priority you will always **MAKE THE TIME!!!**

### 5 Reasons to Care About Cardio!

1. Burn calories and help you lose weight
2. Reduces the risk of heart attack, high cholesterol and blood pressure and diabetes
3. Feel better throughout your day
4. Sleep better at night
5. Reduce stress and irritability

## How often should you exercise???

The frequency of your workouts will depend on your fitness level and your schedule. Beginners should start with 3 non-consecutive days of cardio and work their way up to more. The general guidelines are:

- ✓ To maintain current fitness level: 2 days a week
- ✓ To improve your fitness levels or lose weight: 3 or more days a week

But...If you really really REALLY only have two days to



### Cardio Overkill

Doing **too much cardio** is a no-no as well. You do NOT need to kill yourself with hours of cardio... there is a point of diminishing returns and unhealthy overload. Keep it reasonable and always take some rest days during the week.

workout then that's what you do! It's definitely better than nothing. Just keep in mind, the more you follow these guidelines, the easier and quicker you will reach your personal goals!!!

## How hard do you need to work???

Once you are used to exercising (are up to 30 minutes of continuous movement) you can start adjusting your intensity; a crucial factor in your workout because:

- ✓ How hard you work is directly related to how many calories you burn
- ✓ It's an easy part of your workout to change (all you do is work harder!)
- ✓ It's easy to monitor with a heart rate monitor or perceived exertion scale
- ✓ Raising intensity is the best way to burn more calories when you're short on time.



<b>2 Tests of Intensity</b>	
<b>The Simple: <i>The Talk Test</i></b>	<b>The Accurate: <i>Heart Rate Monitor</i></b>
You should be able to talk but not sing: ✓ If you can sing...you are not working hard enough! ✓ If you can't talk...you are working too hard!	Your maximum Heart Rate is: Max. HR = 220 – AGE <b>Ideal Fat Loss:</b> 65%-70% Max. HR <b>Ideal Cardio Condition:</b> 70%-80% Max. HR

The lower your intensity level the longer you will need to exercise in order to burn the same amount of calories as a higher intensity workout. *However...*the higher your intensity, the harder it is to sustain that level AND the less percentage of fat your body will burn for fuel. The ideal **fat burning** intensity is 65% your maximum heart rate. The ideal **cardio conditioning** intensity is 80% your maximum heart rate.



### Target Heart Rate

The target heart rate calculation is just a GUIDELINE! If your goal is 120 beats per minute and you're not even breaking a sweat, feel free to go *faster!*

## Getting Started...

1. Choose cardio that you enjoy. The best exercise for you is the one you will actually do!!!
2. Start with 2 or 3 days a week of your chosen activity with a rest day between workouts.
3. Begin with a 5-10 minute warm up of light cardio to gently increase heart rate.
4. Increase your pace and intensity to slightly harder than comfortable (Use the *Talk Test* or your *Target Heart Rate* to monitor intensity).
5. Go as long as you comfortably can.
6. End each workout with a 5-10 minute cool down and stretching.
7. Each week, increase your workout time by a few minutes until you can exercise continuously for a 30 minutes session.
8. After 4-6 weeks, change your routine by adding another day of exercise, increasing your intensity, adding a new activity and/or increasing the amount of time you exercise.

## Tips for a Better Workout

- ✓ Good shoes go a long way.
- ✓ Begin where you ARE, not where you want to be. You may only be able to exercise for a few minutes at a time, but that will change quickly if you're consistent!
- ✓ Start slowly. Doing too much too soon can lead to injuries and misery.
- ✓ Try new activities. Doing the same thing can lead to plateaus, boredom and muscle imbalance.
- ✓ Feed your body regularly throughout the day and by stay hydrated (before, during and after!)

- ✓ If you're sore or tired, give yourself extra recovery days if needed.
- ✓ Set goals and keep a workout diary to track your progress!