

Interval Training - Your Key to Fitness

When it comes to exercise, the word 'intervals' puts fear in many peoples minds. Intervals are sometimes misunderstood but adding them to your exercise program can help you burn fat and get in shape quicker.

Intervals are not for everyone. To begin performing intervals, you should be in good condition and a physical from your doctor is highly recommended.

What are intervals?

The easiest definition would be periods of high intensity exercise followed by recovery periods of low intensity exercise.

Here's an example. You are following a walking program and have been walking briskly for thirty minutes a day, four days a week. You feel pretty good but would like to lose weight a little quicker.

Intervals might be perfect for you. Begin your regular walking program and, after five minutes, jog for ten, twenty, thirty seconds or more. Your heart rate will begin to increase and your breathing will pick up after this period, return to walking briskly until you have completely recovered. You then begin to jog again.

In the beginning you may only want to perform two or three of these short jogs. That's fine. Do what's comfortable for you. Later, as you become more accustomed to this routine, you can add more jogs or increase the length of time you jog or both.

During each period of jogging, your heart rate has increased. When you stop jogging and continue walking, your heart rate will be at an increased rate for a minute or so. This is an added benefit. During aerobic exercise you want your heart rate to increase, which makes it stronger and makes you healthier.

Intervals work great on a treadmill. You can increase the speed for however long you want, or you can increase the height, so you are walking at the same pace only going uphill.

This is interval training at a low level but you still get benefits from it. You can follow a similar routine in your other aerobic exercise as well.

For instance, if you are riding a bike for exercise, every so often pedal faster until you begin breathing heavier, and then return to riding as before.

You can see that interval training is not only for athletes. It's one of the fastest and most effective means of reaching a top level of fitness and decreasing body fat.

Do these three or four days a week and watch your fitness level go up while your pounds begin to disappear.

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About the Author

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