

I've got to get my "cardio" in.

- What does that even mean?
- Why do you feel like you "have" to do it?
- What are you doing it for?
- Is it even the most effective use of your time now?

These are some questions I'd like for you to ask yourself today.

Also, if you're doing extra cardio so you can eat more, to make up for poor nutrition, or are favoring it over resistance training then this post is for you.

There are so many studies telling us that we should strive for a minimum of 30 minutes of activity per day to stay healthy and fit, but most of those don't tell you how to maximize your return on investment for those 30 minutes.

What happens to many when they're not sure what to do for those 30 minutes, or are pressed for time and need to fit in a "quicky" (get your minds out of the gutter) is they revert to good old-fashioned "cardio."

If you're like me and have ever asked yourself some of these questions:

- How much cardio?
- When is the best time to do cardio?
- Should I do more cardio then weights?
- I already do like 2 hours of cardio a day, now what?
- What's the best type of cardio?
- Is cardio better than weight training for fat loss?
- What about muscle-building?

WTF does cardio even mean?

Then keep on keep'n on and read the rest of this article. It's about to get real WEIRD up in here...

And by weird I mean totally informative and awesome (please forgive me, I work with some 16-year-old hockey players and am down with the slang).

CARDIO, IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE



It seems like there's a lot of cardio confusion going on out there about what is best to do for performance, fat loss, and your health.

Lets be confused by other things instead like [love](#), [personal finances](#), and how to manage our [emotions](#) :)

When you think of cardio in the traditional sense you most likely picture yourself on a run for at least 20 minutes right? Or maybe you're a little more hardcore and feel like that's not enough cardio and consider 45 minutes to an hour your sweet spot.

- Ellipticals
- Bikes (stationary or bicycles)
- Stair steppers/climbers

Are probably a few other things your brain goes to when you think about the word cardio.

When I think about cardio I immediately think about long, boring, and steady state bouts on a treadmill in a gym, which has never made sense to me. Why run on a treadmill when there is a perfectly good world to run on (more on that later).

I'm not going to spend this article arguing that cardio is bad for you or

trying to convince you that you should or shouldn't do it.

For the record, I think that you should - just using the right methods so that you can maximize your return on investment (look at me using my masters degree right there.)

Light aerobic activity actually has been shown to counter the effects of stress, depression, and anxiety in our everyday lives.

Not to mention it reduces the risks of metabolic syndrome, breast cancer, and cardiovascular disease (1).

All that adds up to is a win!

"...Aerobic exercise is key for your head, just as it is for your heart. You may not agree at first; indeed, the first steps are the hardest, and in the beginning, exercise will be more work than fun. But as you get into shape, you'll begin to tolerate exercise, then enjoy it, and finally depend on it.

Regular aerobic exercise will bring remarkable changes to your body, your metabolism, your heart, and your spirits. It has a unique capacity to exhilarate and relax, to provide stimulation and calm, to counter depression and dissipate stress. It's a common experience among endurance athletes and has been verified in clinical trials that have successfully used exercise to treat anxiety disorders and clinical depression. If athletes and patients can derive psychological benefits from exercise, so can you.

How can exercise contend with problems as difficult as anxiety and depression? There are several explanations, some chemical, others behavioral.

The mental benefits of aerobic exercise have a neurochemical basis. Exercise reduces levels of the body's stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. It also stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators. Endorphins are responsible for the "runner's high" and for the feelings of relaxation and optimism that accompany many hard workouts — or, at least, the hot shower after your exercise is over.

Behavioral factors also contribute to the emotional benefits of exercise. As your waistline shrinks and your strength and stamina increase, your self-image will improve. You'll earn a sense of mastery and control, of pride and self-confidence. Your renewed vigor and energy will help you succeed

in many tasks, and the discipline of regular exercise will help you achieve other important lifestyle goals.

Exercise and sports also provide opportunities to get away from it all and to either enjoy some solitude or to make friends and build networks. "All men," wrote St. Thomas Aquinas, "need leisure." Exercise is play and recreation; when your body is busy, your mind will be distracted from the worries of daily life and will be free to think creatively..." -[Harvard Health](#)

CARDIO, WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS



Cardio to me is anything that makes me move and although it can be done on a machine, piece of equipment, inside or outside all it really needs to be is something that makes you move.

- A walk with your smooch partner
- A jog in the park with your dog
- [A swing dancing class](#)
- A game of hockey
- Throwing the football with your boys yo!
- A nice hike outside
- [Some sprints](#) at the sand dunes
- A mountain bike ride
- Some [paddle boarding](#) or kayaking
- Yoga

Anything really that gets your heart beating between 55% and 75% of your maximum heart rate.

Note: Here is an excellent resource for determining your [maximum heart rate](#)

You can also use this [handy-dandy chart](#)

A fit and healthy person may only get their heart rate to 55% of their maximum when they run, hit a brisk bike ride or hilly hike. While someone who is just getting back into shape will more than likely hit that 75% of their maximum heart rate with a walk around the park or up a flight of stairs.

Keep this in mind if you are just getting into this fitness thing. While it can be exciting to go all gun-ho, getting injuries, over-training, or just being so sore you can't move isn't going to help you to stay consistent.

Long story shot here is that cardio is movement. Consistent and daily movement of all bodily extremities (*again, get your mind out of the gutters please... you all know what I'm talking about. GEEZ!*)

CARDIO, LETS CALL IT THIS INSTEAD

I'd like for you and I to never use the word cardio again. As a matter of fact, if I do happen to use it I'd like for you to write me a very nasty email that chastises me for not honoring my word.

From now on when we think about... you know... I'd like for us to think about it in terms of the different energy systems we use when performing different types of... you know :) (*for the sake of the rest of this article I will have to use the word cardio*).

You can start performing better cardio today by understanding the different energy systems your body uses while you exercise.

The Phosphocreatine System (AKA: The Phosphagen System): This system supports very short and extremely high intensity work. You use this energy system when you are working at an all out type effort for 10-20 seconds.

Think very short sprints, vertical jumps/broad jumps, etc...

You can train this system by doing the following:

- One to Two very heavy strength training movements (squats, deadliest, etc..)
- Short Sprints lasting no longer than 20 seconds of effort
- Medicine ball slams or short duration kettlebell swings

Usually 5 to 10 sets of this type of work with long rest periods that allow for complete recovery are ways to train to see improvement.

The Lactic Acid & Anaerobic Glycolysis System (AKA: The Glycolytic System): After that initial use of the Phosphagen system work in the 10-20 second range your body moves into using this system as its primary source of energy.

After the first all out effort seen in your first 10-20 seconds of work you will begin to slow down a bit. You'll notice things like your lungs beginning to press for air, you may even become nauseous as the PH balance in your body begins to change (*You Crossfitters will know what I'm talking about.*)

This is the system that most fitness professionals recommend for losing body fat, keeping or building lean muscle, strengthen muscles, and as a way to get the most out of their gym time.

This energy system relies primarily on [carbohydrates for fuel](#) so if you do a ton of this type of training or take part in a ton of Crossfit those [good carb sources](#) will come in handy for performance.

You can also use this type of training in combination with a [lower carbohydrate](#) eating approach to maximize fat loss if performance is not a primary concern.

Usually this energy system is used during bouts of work lasting 20-40 seconds (*for some it is possible to train within this system for up to two minutes*) with rest in-between sets lasting about thirty (30) seconds to two (2) minutes.

- 200 meter sprints (maybe even longer if you run like the wind)
- Strength training circuits with short rest intervals in-between sets
- Running stairs

Usually 4-8 sets of this type of work is enough to see improvement. However, you may not want to do it more than twice per

week as it can be very demanding on your body and tough to recover from.

The Oxidative Energy System (AKA: The Oxygen System, AKA: "Cardio."): This system usually starts getting used and abused after the two (2) minute mark of moderate to higher intensity training sessions.

We used to use this energy system all the time before cars came into our lives with low intensity walks, jogs, and swims a daily practice.

Those 10 mile walks in the snow to school everyday with newspaper wrapped around your Grandfathers feet are TRUE! :)

To train this system you typically are moving at a slow to medium type pace. Think of things like a walk, slow jog, team sports, hiking, kayaking, and bicycling. This type of work usually lasts longer than five minutes.

- Three (3) to five (5) five-minute bouts of low to moderate work with one (1) to five (5) minutes of rest is one way to train this system.
- You could also perform shorter one (1) to three (3) minute bouts of work followed by one (1) to five (5) minutes of rest for five (5) to ten (10) sets. Or you could even do longer ten to twenty minutes with longer rest periods (upwards of ten minutes) between sets.

An interesting thing about the Oxygen or Cardio system is that it was previously thought that the best way to train it was to do those long slow 30-60 minute sessions of aerobic activity multiple times per week.

Research is now showing us that you can still receive all those cardio or aerobic benefits from short intense workouts like Interval training (*more on this coming up*), weight training, Crossfit workouts, and other high intensity activity.

As it shows the Oxidative system actually is used to help you recover from this type of training so in essence you're killing two birds with one stone by training this way. So when you train with weights and limit your rest between sets (*this means no talking on the phone, checking your Facebook mobile, or gossiping*), sprint, or perform other interval training activities you actually are doing your "CARDIO."

WHY INTERVAL TRAINING/HIIT TRAINING IS YOUR BEST CARDIO BET



NOTE: HIIT: High intensity interval training

First, what is interval training or HIIT?

Simply stated it is altering between high intensity exercise and low intensity exercise (or complete rest). By high intensity I mean working at roughly 75%-90% of your maximum heart rate or at a pace that is fairly uncomfortable and you can't wait to rest after a specified time :)

This can be done on a treadmill, outside, with your own body weight, or even using weights.

The two main pathways your body uses energy are through the **anaerobic** (*high intensity without oxygen as it can not get to where it needs to be fast enough*) and **aerobic** (*low intensity with oxygen because it can get to where it needs to be fast enough*).

I won't go into depth about the details between the two (*that would be an entirely different post*) but we actually covered these in the section above.

The reason I suggest interval training is because it uses both pathways... again, maximizing your return on investment.

Note: Interval training must usually be done at 60% of your maximum heart rate. This of course will change depending on a host of variables like

current fitness level, age, gender, etc..

We discussed interval training a bit above with the different examples of how our different energy systems are used by varying the time you are working and resting.

- 30 seconds sprints, 90 seconds of rest and repeat for multiple sets
- 1 minute of moderate to high intensity work with 1-3 minutes of rest

Another reason I'm in the interval camp instead of those 20 minute or longer, or three mile runs or 20-50 mile bike rides is because that "traditional cardio" stuff doesn't give you much of an "after-burn" effect other wise known as Exercise Post Oxygen Consumption (EPOC).

What this means is that although you may be working up a sweat and burning some calories while doing the work during that time period you're not getting much benefit after the workout. It has been shown that high intensity interval training can greatly affect this. (2)

I don't know about you but for me that's key! You've got an entire 23 hours left in the day if you are spending one hour in the gym and I want to make sure that I get the most bang for my buck over the course of those 23 hours.

"...In one study, participants who cycled vigorously for 45 minutes burned roughly 190 calories more in the 14 hours after exercise than on days when they didn't work out at all... (3)

Other benefits found from interval training include:

- Fat loss
- Cardiovascular strength
- Improved sport-specific performance
- Improved ability of your body to use fat and carbohydrate
- Mental strength (pushing your limits)
- Improved fast-twitch muscle fibers (used in strength, power, speed, and those "looking-good" muscles)
- More benefit in less time

However, 45 minutes of vigorous exercise conducted at roughly 75%-85% of your maximum heart rate can be pretty difficult for most. Through interval training and alternating those bouts of high intensity with rest it now becomes something anyone can do regardless of fitness level.

Interval Training for Fat Loss

What many of you may be interested in is how to use interval training specifically for fat loss.

"...A study from the University of New South Wales followed the fitness and body composition changes in 45 overweight women in a 15-week period. The women were divided into two groups and assigned interval or continuous cycling routines. The interval "sprint" cycling group performed twenty minutes of exercise, which repeated eight seconds of "all out" cycling and then twelve seconds of light exercise. The continuous group exercised for 40 minutes at a consistent rate. At the end of the study, the women in the interval group had lost three times the body fat as the women in the continuous exercise group. (An interesting note: the interval group's loss in body fat came mostly from the legs and buttocks area.)..." - [Marks Daily Apple](#)

The number one reason most of us should be engaging in interval training for fat loss is due to time.

When it comes to exercise first think consistency and then intensity. It's much easier for all of us to develop the habit of performing Tabata type interval training sessions (*more on this later*); which can last as little as four minutes then most of us can develop the habit of 30-60 minute exercise sessions.

And even better is that these short high intensity training sessions actually work (4)

Long story short, we're busier than ever and unfortunately many of us don't consider our health a priority. More often than not a lack of results isn't due to your intensity it is due to the lack of [consistency](#).

"...For years, the American Heart Association and other organizations have recommended that people complete 30 minutes or more of continuous, moderate-intensity exercise, such as a brisk walk, five times a week, for overall good health.

But millions of Americans don't engage in that much moderate exercise, if they complete any at all. Asked why, a majority of respondents, in survey after survey, say, "I don't have time..." - [New York Times Wellness Blog](#)

What are some ways you can step up your cardio game to improve your health, fitness, and body composition?

1. Tabata Training

How:

- **Beginner** - 8 sets of 20 seconds of high intensity exercise with 10 seconds of rest. Totally work time would only be 4 minutes
- **Intermediate** - 16 sets of 20 seconds of high intensity exercise with 10 seconds of rest. Totally work time would be 8 minutes
- **Advanced** - 16-32 sets of 20 seconds of work with 10 seconds of rest. Total work time would be a maximum of 16 minutes

Exercises:

Anything really from sprints, biking, bodyweight, or low injury weight bearing movements like

- [medicine ball slams](#)
- [wall-ball](#)
- [kettlebell swings](#)
- tire flips
- [sledge hammer hits](#). You can really get pretty creative.

Example:

Here is an example of how you can perform a Tabata workout in the comfort of your own home... wearing your pajama's even.

- [Squats](#): 20 seconds on, 10 seconds of rest x 4-8 sets
- [Pull-ups](#) or [inverted rows](#): 20 seconds on, 10 seconds of rest x 4-8 sets
- [Push-ups](#)/[Wall push-ups](#)/Or [incline push-ups](#): 20 seconds on, 10 seconds of rest x 4-8 sets
- [Sit-ups](#): 20 seconds on, 10 seconds of rest x 4-8 sets

More Tabata Resources

1. [6 New Tabata Workouts](#)
2. [Tabata Exercises](#)

3. [Tabata Method](#)
4. [Tabata Training](#)
5. [11 Butt Kicking Tabata Workouts](#)

2. Resistance Training (Weights or Body Weight)

Yes sir-re-bob you can actually get your cardio on through [weight training](#). You'll still benefit aerobically while at the same time building lean muscle, torching body fat, and avoid feeling like a hamster in a wheel.

By keeping your rest intervals short between sets you can keep your heart rate up while still gaining strength.

How:

To get a great body weight workout in try [The Noob Body Weight Training Program](#) or [The Incredible Hulk Body Weight Program](#).

If you would like to include some weights into your routine and still benefit aerobically try this.

Example:

- [DB Walking Lunges](#), 20 total reps (10/per leg); rest 30 seconds
- [Push-ups](#) or [Flat DB Press](#), 12-15 reps; rest 30 seconds
- [kettlebell swings](#), 15-20 reps; rest 30 seconds
- [DB Thrusters](#), 12-15 reps; rest 30 seconds
- [Box Jumps](#), 12-15 reps; rest 60 seconds

You will move from one exercise to the next after resting the required time. Once you have finished all five exercises in a row you will rest 60 seconds and repeat the circuit three (3) to five (5) for times.

To decrease the level of difficulty to you can increase the amount of rest you take after each exercise but keep it under 90 seconds.

You can also increase the level of difficulty by shortening the rest periods. Fore example you could only rest 15 seconds after each exercise before moving onto the next one and eventually get to no rest after each exercise.

3. Resistance Training/Body Training and Aerobic activity

Another way you can get more efficient with your workouts at home or in

the gym is by alternating weight training or body weight movements with traditional cardiovascular exercises.

How:

You will perform a strength exercise followed by a cardiovascular exercise and repeat for a series of circuits

Example:

- [Bench press](#), 10 reps; rest 30 seconds
- [Rowing Machine Sprint](#) (or Sprint), 200 meters; rest 90 seconds
- [Pull-ups](#) (or [DB Rows](#)), 10 reps; rest 30 seconds
- Rowing Machine Sprint (or Sprints), 200 meters; rest 90 seconds
- [DB Walking Lunges](#), 20 reps (10/per leg); rest 30 seconds
- Rowing Machine Sprints (or Sprint), 200 meters; rest 90 seconds

After you finish your final row or run you would rest 90 seconds and repeat this circuit three (3) to five (5) more times.

Again, you can increase or decrease the level of difficulty by playing with the rest that you are taking but make sure to keep it fairly intense. Try not to rest more than 2-3 minutes after the sprints or more than 90 seconds after the weight movements.

4. Traditional sprints

You can always perform interval training by running, biking, rowing, or skipping rope.

Running will be your most effective method of performing sprint intervals as it provides for the greatest caloric burn, intensity, and fat burning. However, it is also the one that typically leads to the most injuries.

- Pulled muscles
- Shin splints
- Bruised heels
- Runners knee
- Achilles Tendonitis
- Plantar Fasciitis

You can read more about common [running injuries here](#)

If you are not use to running I would work running in slowly as part of your interval training routine. Instead try performing intervals of shuffles, karaoke, and shuttle runs. If you can, avoid the treadmill and get outside. Treadmill running doesn't involve the hamstrings as much as running naturally outside does.

You just started working out again the recumbent or upright bike at the gym would be a great place to start your interval training. You'll want to adjust the level of resistance to accommodate your level of fitness.

It may take you a few trys to figure it out but if you can listen to your body or wear a heart rate monitor to gauge how hard you're working. REMEMBER, interval training should be done at high intensities.

The rowing machines and various climbers in your gym can also be used just make sure to keep your hands of the equipment. There is a very big metabolic (*energy demand, calorie burn, and intensity*) change when you hold onto the handles of a treadmill or climber and when you don't (5)

How:

Beginner Interval Routine

You can run, row, bike, swim, jump rope, or use any other traditional cardiovascular exercise to perform your interval. I personally like to go outside to a track, park, or find a hill. This is a great chance to make it fun for yourself.

After you have chosen your interval method for the day you would perform this training like so:

- 3 minutes of light warm-up/jog/run/walk: Just something to get the blood flowing.
- Minute 4: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 5-6: 120 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 7: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 8-9: 120 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 10: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 11-12: 120 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog,

- etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- 3 minutes of light cool-down/jog/run/walk

Tips: If using a treadmill or some sort of machine make sure to write down the speed, incline, resistance, or any other form of measurement so that you can be sure to keep challenging yourself of the next few weeks.

Tips: If you feel up to it you can add a little bit to the end of your weight training workouts. I would not do it on your rest days unless you are already fairly well conditioned or have been training consistently for a while. Keep those rest days as 20-30 minutes of light aerobic, fun, and restorative days... PLAY DAYS!

Tips: Do not perform intervals more than two days in a row as they can be very taxing on your body. Recovery is very important so make sure you are giving your body adequate time to rest when it calls for it.

Intermediate Interval Routine

After you have chosen your interval method for the day you would perform this training like so:

- 3 minutes of light warm-up/jog/run/walk: Just something to get the blood flowing.
- Minute 4: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 5-6:30: 90 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 6:30-7:30: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 7:30-9:00: 90 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 9-10: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 10-11:30: 90 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 11:30-12:30: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 12:30-14:00: 90 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 14:00-15:00: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 15:00-16:30: 90 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)

- Minute 16:30-18:00: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 18-20:00: Light cool down work (walking, light rowing, etc...)

Intermediate Interval Routine #2

After you have chosen your interval method for the day you would perform this training like so:

- 3 minutes of light warm-up/jog/run/walk: Just something to get the blood flowing.
- Minute 4: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 5: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 6: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 7: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 8: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 9: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 10: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 11: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 12: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 13: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 14: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 15: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 16: 60 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 17: 60 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- 3 minute of a very light cool-down

Advanced Interval Routine

After you have chosen your interval method for the day you would perform this training like so:

- 5 minutes of light warm-up/jog/run/walk: Just something to get the blood flowing.
- Minute 5-5:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 5:30-6: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 6-6:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 6:30-7:30 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 7-7:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 7:30-8: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 8-8:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 8:30-9: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 9-9:30 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 9:30-10: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 10-10:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 10:30-11: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 11-11:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 11:30-12: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 12-12:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 12:30-13: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 13-13:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05% effort)
- Minute 13:30-14: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
- Minute 14-14:30: 30 seconds of higher intensity work (think 90-05%

- effort)
- Minute 14:30-15: 30 seconds of moderate intensity work (walk, jog, etc.. think 60-65% effort or enough to allow you to recover)
 - 5 minute cool-down very light work to allow for the heart rate to come down and breathing to become regular.

5. The Crossfit Way

It seems like [Crossfit is taking over the world](#). In my honest opinion I have a love/hate relationships with it (*for the record I am a [Crossfit coach](#)*) I love that it gets people off of the couch and instead gets them moving on a regular basis by providing a great community and teaching the most basic movements.

But I hate when intensity is emphasized over form so please find a gym with good trainers and programming if you decide to give it a shot. I'll save that article for another day but for now you can use some of its methods to provide yourself with an excellent strength, aerobic, and anaerobic workout.

How:

There are tons of Crossfit workouts you can perform but here are a couple you can try if you have the proper equipment.

These workouts can be very demanding so please make sure you are familiar with the exercises or having someone knowledgeable with you as you perform these.

Example #1:

5 minute AMRAP (perform as many rounds as possible in 7 minutes)

- 5 [Burpees](#)
- 5 [kettlebell swings](#)

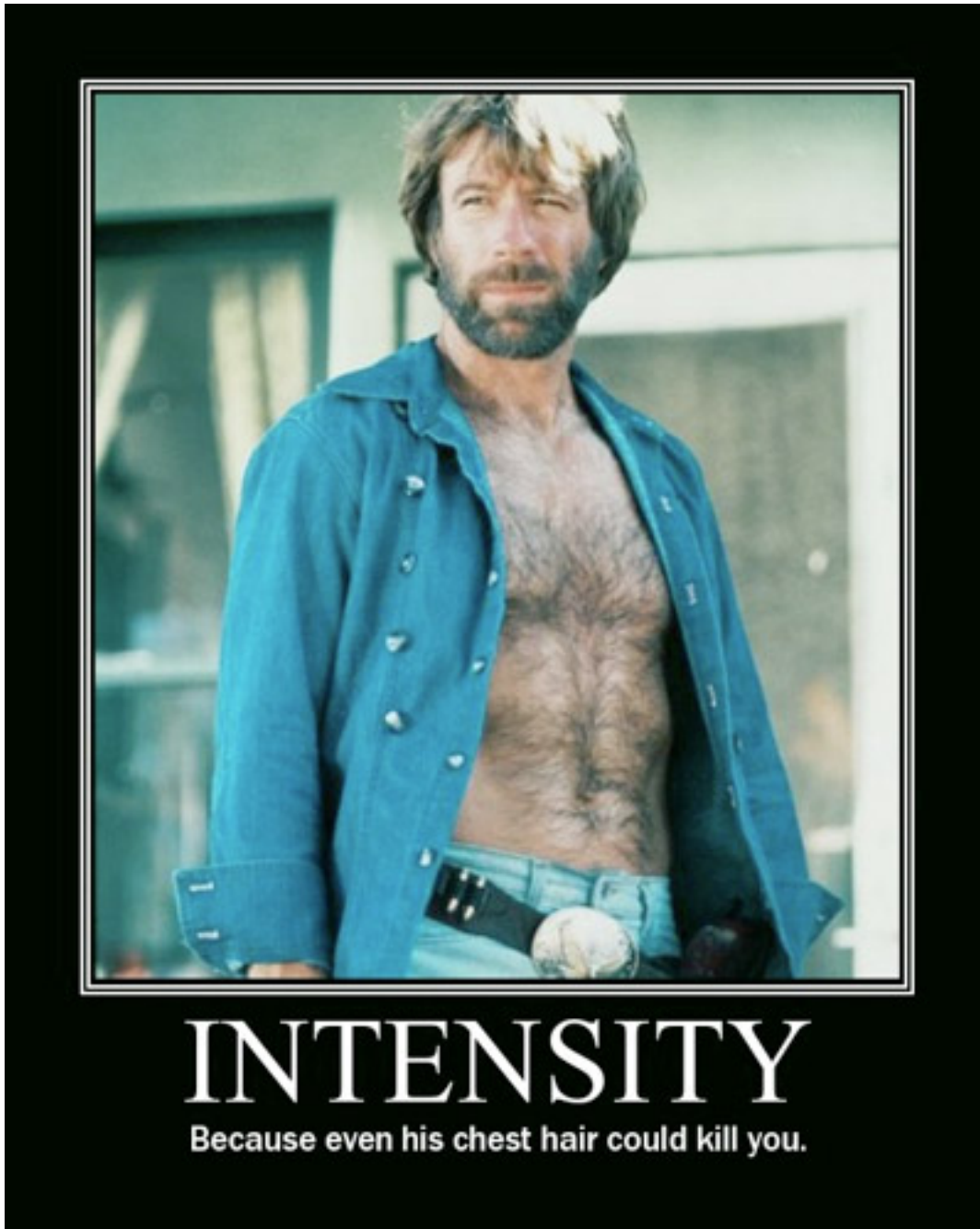
Sounds easy enough right? Now give it a shot :) If you're more advanced you can rest 2-3 minutes after your first attempt and perform another.

Example #2:

2 minute AMRAP; rest 1 minute and repeat 5 times. When you start each round you will pick up right where you left off in the round before.

- 10 [wall balls](#)
- 25 [double-unders](#) or (50 jump rope or jumping jacks)

PLAYING WITH REST INTERVALS AND OTHER MEASURES OF INTENSITY



Very quickly, you can play with the type of interval training you are

performing by adjusting the rest intervals that you use.

A few of the more common ways to do this are as follows:

- Work to rest, 1:1 - This means if you work intensely for 60 seconds you rest 60 seconds.
- Work to rest, 1:2 - This means if you work intensely for 60 seconds you rest for 120 seconds.
- Work to rest, 1:3 - This means if you work intensely for 60 seconds you rest for 180 seconds.

You can play with these based on how you are feeling that day, your current fitness level, or depending on what energy system you want to train that day (we discussed this at the beginning).

SO WHY DOES INTERVAL TRAINING WORK SO WELL?

High intensity exercise like interval training causes a hormonal response in your body that involves your bodies natural growth hormone, testosterone, endorphins, adrenaline, and cortisol (6)

Long story short the reaction that is occurring in your body is partly responsible for the physiological and aesthetic benefits that you will see especially with regards to fat loss.

"...Researchers from Canada compared the effect of a 3-day-a-week, 6-week interval running program with an endurance protocol on body composition and time trial performance in young trainees. The interval protocol was six 30-second all-out sprints with 4 minutes rest. The endurance protocol was 30 to 60 minutes of running at 65 percent of maximal.

Results showed the following better results from the sprint program:

- *The sprint group lost an impressive 12.4 percent body fat and 2 kg of fat mass. The endurance group lost 5.8 percent body fat and about half a kilo of fat. Both groups increased muscle mass by a small 1 percent.*
- *The sprint group spent a total of .75 of an hour actually sprinting compared to the endurance group that spent a whopping 13.5 hours running.*

- *Both groups improved by 5 percent on a 2,000-meter time trial.*

Here you see that you can lose more fat and maintain muscle in MUCH less training time by doing sprints. You will improve conditioning, get faster, and be able to sustain a higher work rate for longer, as seen by the better performance on the middle-distance time trial..." -[Charles Poliquin](#)

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER & WRAPPING THIS NOVEL UP

When you think about "CARDIO" from now on I hope that you consider it to be an enjoyable and fun activity for yourself. Make it a part of your fitness routine that provides you the opportunity to enjoy yourself, loved ones, friends, the outdoors, and activities you really like or have always wanted to try.

So how often should you be performing "CARDIO?"

EVERYDAY! Make it a point to simply move and enjoy experiences, people, places, and things. Find more daily movement in your life by taking the stairs, parking further from the grocery store, or racing your kid back to the car.

It feels like most people are stuck are stuck in there ways or fall back to old habits and outdated thinking when it comes to performing cardio. I'd even suggest that most don't know why they are actually doing it, they just think it's what they should be doing so they just do it.

Before doing your "cardio" or anything in life for that matter ask yourself why you are doing it, how is this method currently working for you, and are your goals and behaviors aligned with each other (*i.e.: If you want to build muscle why are you running every day?*)

A few things to think about:

1. [Get clear](#) on your fitness goals and behave in a way that is productive towards achieving them.
2. Schedule specific time in your days for regular exercise. Make it an appointment with yourself. Nothing should come between you and this appointment.
3. Weight training or resistance training first, cardio second.

4. Don't waste time in the gym performing your cardio when you can get outside and do it.

I know that there is a ton of info here. It may be an good idea to bookmark this page or to save this PDF for easy access later.

We covered a lot here but there is so much more info out there you can benefit from.