



Wellness News Network™

Your Source for Health & Wellness Information

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Interval Training: Get into Great Shape in Less Time

Presented by:

Introduction

We often set goals to lose weight and get in shape. But as we all know, that's easier said than done. Time is in limited supply, which makes it difficult to participate in a regular exercise routine. But did you know you can slash the length of your exercise session and still get the benefits of a longer workout?

Fitness Secrets of Pro Athletes

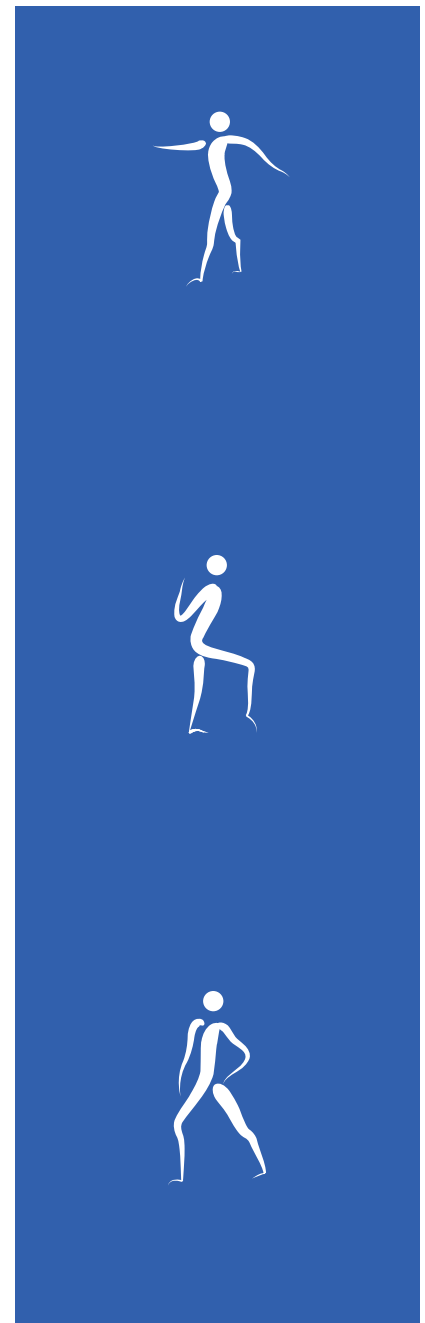
Interval training has been used by professional athletes for years to reach optimal physical condition. But recent research shows that just about everybody can benefit from incorporating interval training into their exercise program.

Your chiropractor definitely supports your goal of staying physically active. But each of us has unique considerations when it comes to exercising, such as taking into account age, chronic health conditions and fitness

level. This is why you should always discuss your fitness plans with your chiropractor before starting any exercise routine.

So what exactly is interval training? It's simply stepping up your exercise intensity for short bursts, then returning to a more reasonable pace. You implement these short sprints several times during your exercise routine. What makes interval training so appealing is that it works for almost all types of cardiovascular exercise, even walking! For example, after a few minutes of strolling, you might increase your walking speed for 15 to 30 seconds before returning to your regular pace. You continue alternating between sprint speed and moderate speed throughout your walk. That's really all there is to it.

Pro athletes and their trainers often keep detailed records of interval training. But there's nothing wrong with taking a more relaxed approach: match your exercise intensity to how energetic you feel. If you're tired, then reduce the intensity of each sprint interval.



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Multiple Benefits from Interval Training

Studies on interval training show several key advantages ...

- **Burn more calories.** When you increase your exercise intensity, you lose more calories. Research from Australia indicates that during sprinting the body boosts the levels of catecholamines – chemical messengers that instruct fat cells to let go of their fat.
- **Get fit. Save time.** One of the biggest reasons we don't exercise frequently is we can't fit it into our hectic schedules. Interval training can deliver the same cardiovascular benefits of longer, steady pace exercise but in less time.
- **Fewer aches and pains.** Interval training reduces certain biochemical reactions in the body that contribute to muscles soreness.
- **Adds variety.** If your workout routine is the same each time, you may lose interest. Interval training freshens the pace and engages your brain more actively than simply putting your mind on “auto-pilot” when you exercise.



Researchers at McMaster University in Canada made an interesting discovery about the heart and blood vessels when interval training is used. In a six-week study conducted by the university, researchers had one group of participants do interval training on exercise bikes for 30 minutes, three times a week. They did four to six 30-second interval sprints for each session. A second group did moderate, non-interval cycling for at least 40 minutes, five days a week. The results? The interval group's blood vessel function was improved as much as the non-interval group. Researchers remarked, “We conclude that SIT (sprint interval training) is a time-efficient strategy to elicit improvements in peripheral vascular structure and function that are comparable to ET (endurance training).”¹

An Australian study found evidence of interval training's effectiveness for weight loss. Three times a week, participants rode for 20 minutes on stationary bikes. They included a series of intense eight-second sprints during each session. Another group did 40 minutes of steady-pace riding with no sprints. During the four-month study, the group that did interval training lost six pounds while the non-interval group lost less than two pounds.

The advantages of interval training are proven. But the best advice is to start slow; adjust your interval intensity to your current fitness level. If you push your body too hard and too fast, you could injure yourself. Always warm up your muscles to prevent strain, and do some stretching after completing your exercise routine.

Quote to Inspire

*"Learning together
is a beginning,
working together
is progress,
keeping together
is success."*

- B.J. Palmer

References and Sources:

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1. Sprint interval and traditional endurance training induce similar improvements in peripheral arterial stiffness and flow-mediated dilation in healthy humans

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Six Sessions of Sprint Interval Training Increases Muscle Oxidative Potential and Cycle Endurance Capacity in Humans

- J Appl Physiol (February 10, 2005).

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