

~Build Your Cardio Plan~

A reminder that before you begin any exercise program you should always consult with your physician. If you are inactive, sedentary or have not been exercising consistently the first step is to start moving. Start by walking, marching in place, riding a bicycle or working on a stair mill or tread mill. 10 minutes is a beginning and I will applaud your efforts! Once you can do 10 minutes then I want you to increase it by 5 minutes every few days until you are up to 30 minutes per day on most days of the week.

If you are just starting out I recommend beginning with Steady State Cardiovascular Exercise. Once you are comfortable with that, begin diversifying and adding the other types of exercise into your routine as you feel is appropriate for your health and fitness levels.

Type 1/Level 1 Cardio: Steady State

If you are just beginning an exercise program then **Steady State Cardiovascular Exercise** is a great place to begin. It doesn't require any special equipment and you can do it almost anywhere. This kind of exercise is "aerobic" exercise or it is performed "with oxygen". It engages your RED muscle fibers, also refer called Type 1 Skeletal Muscle Fibers. If your goal is to increase your over all health and reduce body fat this type of exercise will move you toward your goal. In order to achieve the benefits of reducing your body fat you must do at least 30 minutes of this type of exercise per session and you must keep your exercise intensity in the "Fat Burning Zone". This means not too high an intensity. You should be working out hard enough to break a sweat and still be able to carry on a conversation, but if you were to work just a little harder then it would be too hard to carry on a conversation at all. On a scale of 1-10 your RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion) should be at about a level 7. A "typical" THR (Target Heart Rate) in for this type of exercise is about 130 – 140 beats per minute. I've included a chart here which demonstrates how much fat and how much sugar are burned during longer sessions of Steady State Cardiovascular Exercise.

Duration How Long	Intensity How Hard	Fat burned For Fuel	Stored Sugar Used For Fuel
REST	NONE	50%	50%
10 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	40%	60%
20 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	60%	40%
30 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	70%	30%
40 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	75%	25%
50 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	80%	20%
60 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	85%	15%

120 MIN	THR/Level 7 RPE	99%	1%
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Ideal types of **Steady State Cardiovascular Exercise** are weight bearing exercises such as Walking (especially on an incline if you are using a treadmill or on hills if you are walking outdoors), climbing stairs on a stair mill or at your local school stadium, or jogging. Weight bearing cardio engages more muscle fibers and helps to strengthen bones.

Other types of steady state cardiovascular exercise include working on a stationary bicycle, elliptical trainer, or rowing. These are not weight bearing so they are not optimal, but they are still beneficial.

Type 2/Level 2 Cardio: Interval Training

Interval training should be short and sweet. It should never be performed for more than 30 minutes at a time and only 2-3 times per week. I don't recommend it for everyone because it requires maximum bursts of energy. If you are severely overweight, out of shape, have joint problems or have not been cleared by your physician, interval training may not be appropriate for you. Now that you have the cautions I will tell you how to perform interval training and what the advantages are if you decide this is appropriate for you.

Interval Training recruits a different type muscle fiber than Steady State Aerobics. Interval training uses white muscle fibers, also known as Type II Skeletal Muscle Fibers. This type of exercise is anaerobic, or without oxygen, because it creates an oxygen deficit. An advantage of Interval Training is that it will keep your metabolism higher for several hours after your training session.

Interval Training can be performed on a treadmill, stair mill, outdoors on a track, or on the stairs. You can also use a bicycle, elliptical trainer, or rowing machines, but remember these are not optimal. After warming up for at least 5 minutes at a comfortable pace you will increase your intensity to maximum for 30-60 seconds. This would be a full out effort of motion: sprint, jogging, or running up the stairs or whatever form of movement you are using. Follow this by 60-120 seconds of recovery in which your heart rate will slow down. Repeat this cycle for 30 minutes, but no longer, and follow it by a 5-10 minute cool down.

Longer is not better when you are performing interval training. If you perform this high level intensity of exercise for too long then the body will begin to break down muscle tissue in order to create glucose. You will begin to cannibalize your muscles! This has a negative effect on body composition and metabolism. So remember, with interval training short 30 minute sessions yield optimal results!

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