

## High Intensity Interval Training

If you are a person looking to take your fitness and fat loss to the next level without spending more time in the gym, then high-intensity interval training might be just what you are looking for. This style of exercise, however, is not for everyone. High-intensity interval training is not for those who have any cardiovascular problems or health concerns limited by intense exercise or are aerobically out of shape. Remember, if it is not for you now, it could be for you later. If there are any concerns or doubts, it is always wise and advised to check with your medical professional before trying any new exercise program.

### Advantages and Disadvantages

High-intensity interval training is a specialized form of interval training involving short bouts of maximum intensity exercise followed by longer bouts of low to moderate-intensity exercise. A number of advantages not provided by traditional steady intensity exercise occur during high-intensity workouts due to the brief periods of time you push yourself into a higher intensity level. Advantages include improvement in overall fitness, performance, recovery time, weight loss and heart rate.

A disadvantage is, if performed too often, you can increase the risk of overtraining. Make sure to allow one to two days of rest between sessions.

### Guidelines

Before starting a high-intensity interval training program, you should first be able to run at 70 to 85 percent of your estimated maximum heart rate for at least 20 to 30 minutes without having to stop. You can calculate your maximum heart rate by subtracting your age from 220.

Since this type of training program is physically demanding, it is important to slowly ease into it by warming up first. If you experience any chest pain or difficulty breathing, start to cool down. There is no single accepted formula. To gain benefits, you do not need to perform high-intensity interval training during every exercise session. Optimally, you will maintain a balance between high-intensity training and steady-sustained aerobic training.

### Important Variables

There are four important variables to consider when designing an interval program:

- Intensity (speed or heart rate zones) of the work interval. Maintain an intensity level of 60 to 70 percent of your maximum heart rate during warm-up, cool down and recovery intervals. Maintain an intensity level of 80 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate during the high-intensity phase.
- The duration (distance or time) of each work interval should range from one to four minutes.
- The duration of the active recovery interval should range from two to eight minutes.

- Each interval repetition should be performed six to eight times.

## Resources

- American College of Exercise: [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org)
- American College of Sports Medicine: [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)

Here when you need us.

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