

Many faces of interval cardio – cheat sheet for working out

Interval cardio training can be summed up as intense periods/bursts of exercise alternating between less intense periods.

Compared to typical, steady state cardio, interval cardio training can:

- Help you achieve more cardio fitness faster
- Burn more fat faster
- Elevate your good cholesterol
- Help muscles contract more forcefully
- Keep your metabolism elevated longer after exercise is over



Maximum benefit in minimal time—here are examples of how to mix into your exercise.

Option 1: Interval cardio plain and simple

Hop on a treadmill, bike, run outside, etc. Warm up for 5 minutes at an easy pace. During the work part of your intervals, work as hard as you can for whatever work period you choose. Rule of thumb on recovery period is—the shorter and faster/harder the work period, the longer the recovery period proportional to work period. If using a heart rate monitor, recover to 70% of your max during recovery (if you don't know how to use a heart rate monitor, ask a staff member). 3 different 20 minute workouts could look like this.

Warm-up 2 min on/2 min off 2 min on/2 min off 2 min on/2 min off 2 min on/2 min off 2 min on/2 min off Cool-down	Warm-up 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off 4 minutes medium pace 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off 1 min on/2 min off Cool-down	Warm-up 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off 4 minutes medium pace 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off 30 sec on/90 sec off Cool-down
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Play with the rest and recovery periods. Experiment with different work/rest grouping. Track calories and distance if using a cardio machine. Track time and distance if running or cycling outside. Work to steadily improve your performance workout to workout. Gradually shorten recovery periods, increase speed, resistance or incline (if using a machine).

Option 2: Using Machine Programs

Follow along with pre-programmed interval routine on your favorite cardio machine(s). Let the machine do the thinking and control the time increments. Follow along with the columns of your selected program profile. Work and recover the same way as above based on the time increments on the machine. Track your progress.

Option 3: Mixing it in with Strength Training

Short on time? Plug some cardio sprinting into your strength training. Every 3-4 sets of strength training, hop on a piece of cardio and sprint it out for 2-4 minutes. Track your time and distance on your training sheet—keep trying to beat it from one workout to the next. No machines available? Jump rope, do drills like box jumps, burpees, mountain climbers, rope drills, etc. If you need some ideas—ask Fitness Staff.

Option 4: Tabatas

Tabata intervals are a high intensity cardio protocol using 8 rounds of 20 seconds of work with 10 seconds of rest.

20 sec on/10 sec off	Use compound weight movements like: squat and press, kettlebell swings, kettlebell snatches, burpees, mountain climbers, rope drills, kettlebell clean and press, rowing machine, etc. Do as many reps as possible for 20 seconds. Track reps. Your score is whatever the lowest number of reps you got in your worst round (usually round 7 or 8). Try to beat your performance workout to workout. Need only be done 3 times per week—it's tough.
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	
20 sec on/10 sec off	

Plug Tabatas in at the end of a strength workout.

The rest of the time.....

Interval cardio need only be done every other day. Low to medium intensity (65 – 85% max HR), steady state cardio is done for other workouts. You may want to mix in one extra long (45 min+) workout a week –along with some shorter times (20-45 min).

