

# Burn More Fat with These Interval Training Tips

By: Nicole Nichols :



What if I told you there was an exercise technique that could burn more calories—and fat—in less time that was also fun? You may think that I was hawking some fitness gadget in an infomercial, or simply lying to you, but neither of those theories hold true. The amazing workout is called interval training. During interval training, exercisers alternate between high-intensity efforts and low-intensity recovery efforts during a single cardio (aerobic) workout session. It can be as simple as sprinting between two telephone poles and then walking for the next two, or a regimented plan using a stopwatch and specific training schedule. Either way, adding just a couple sessions of interval training to your workouts each week is sure to boost your fitness level, accelerate your fat loss and help you beat boredom.

**Here are 7 reasons to try interval training yourself, plus tips and workouts to get you started.**

## **Interval training burns more calories.**

Most of us exercise at a continuous intensity during our cardio workouts. This is called "continuous training." While continuous training is the most common way to exercise and still offers ample benefits, such as burning calories, "Interval training burns calories quicker," Kerri O'Brien of Life Fitness recently told Reuters. "If you're doing interval training for 20 minutes it can burn as many calories you would in 40 minutes," of steady-state training, she explained.



**Interval training burns more fat.** Doing short bursts of higher-intensity exercise encourages your body to burn body fat as fuel. A small study from 2007 had eight women in their 20s cycle for 10 sets of intervals (four minutes higher intensity, followed by two minutes of rest). After the interval training, the women burned 36% more fat during an hour of continuous training (moderate cycling). The results were published in the Journal of Applied Physiology. Other studies have found that even when the workout is over, exercisers have a higher post-workout calorie burn (their metabolism remains elevated) after interval training than after continuous training.

**Interval training works for all fitness levels.** According to the American Council on Exercise, everyone from beginner exercisers to elite athletes can perform (and benefit from) interval training. Beginners, for example, can use interval training to slowly work their way up to higher intensity exercise, such as walk-jog intervals, which can help one work up to running continuously. Advanced exercisers can use high intensity intervals to improve speed, power and performance.

Interval training can boost your fitness level. The same study mentioned above also found that subjects who performed interval training improved their cardiovascular fitness by 13%. Another study, also published in the Journal of Applied Physiology (in 2005),

found that college-age men and women doubled their exercise endurance after just two weeks of interval training. The control group who did not perform interval training, showed no improvements in their endurance.

**Interval training works for the tortoise and the hare.** Sometimes you feel like doing a hard workout. Sometimes, you feel like taking it easy. Interval training is a great alternative to both scenarios, and perfect for people who need to force themselves to change up their programs. I tend to turn to interval training on days that I'm feeling a little lazy since I know I won't have to force myself to do a tough workout, and that I'll get to enjoy the low-intensity exercise I'm craving. In this sense, interval training is a great way to cross train, too. If your usual routine is to run at a steady pace, or pick one level on the elliptical and stick it out for 30 minutes, you'll be doing your body a favor by changing up the speed and intensity of your workouts. You don't even have to change what you do to work out. Interval training can be applied to almost any type of exercise: walking, running, biking, cardio machines, indoor cycling, swimming, dancing—even strength training.

**Interval training can combat boredom.** Probably one of the greatest benefits of interval training is that it really passes the time, which can make your workouts seem more fun. Rather than drudging away at the same boring intensity, interval training keeps your mind engaged and helps your workouts go by faster by breaking down one long workout into smaller, more manageable chunks of time. Each interval you complete is another notch closer to your cool down.

**Interval training means less time in the gym.** Since you're working harder (for a short period), you can get away with shorter workouts when you perform interval training—and the benefits are essentially the same in terms of endurance and calorie burn. This is a great option when you're short on time but want to squeeze in an effective workout, or when you have a hard time committing to exercise in general. The shorter your workouts are, the more likely you'll be to stick with them.