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A Cardio Snob's Workout

By Valerie McDermott

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As I peruse the pages of various holiday issues of my favorite fitness/womens magazines I notice many articles about the benefits of practicing yoga at this stressful time of year. At the risk of sounding like a cardio snob, if I have 30 minutes a day (if I'm lucky) and i have to get into a special outfit in about a month and a half. I am not spending that 30 minutes taking cleansing breaths and stretching.

Don't get me wrong, if you exercise regularly year round you can absolutely benefit from a yoga class 1 maybe 2 times a week. However, if you are now just starting a routine in hopes of fitting into a size 8, then mama get ready to sweat. Here is the routine I recommend.

Pick 3 (or at least 2) cardio activities to save you from burnout (see list below).

Perform 1 of these activities at least 30 minutes (45 or 60 minutes if your schedule allows) 4 times a week. This should include a 3-5 min warmup and 3-5 min cool down (you can stretch while you wait in the deli line).

Perform strength training moves using free weights, stability ball or nautilus machines for 30 minutes (preferably 45 or 60 mins) 2 times a week. This should include 3-5 min warm up and 3-5 mins stretching. Make sure to concentrate on whatever body part will be exposed (arms, back, calves, legs, shoulders...you get the point).

Do remember, after this routine kicks you into gear and gets you into your holiday outfit... CONTINUE!!! You can add wonderful activities like yoga, kick boxing, pilates, meditation and the benefits will be: a strong body, a beautiful posture, tons of energy and a radiant glow. But for now you just need to get into that halter dress!

Cardio options:

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running

walking

treadmill work

elliptical trainer

spinning

aerobics and/or kick boxing

bike riding

roller blading

stair climber

Valerie is mother of 2 and co-founder of

a website devoted to

helping mothers rediscover their favorite hobbies like travel, fitness and girls night out.

Boring Ol' Cardio

By The Icon Diet Reader

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Cardio is a very important aspect of any work out. There are numerous benefits to a good cardio routine. In the real world, there are many ways to get a good cardio workout. You can jog, play sports and get chased by the police. In the gym cardio usually revolves around a handful of machines. There are the stair climbers or steppers, the elliptical trainers, tread mills, and bicycles. That's about it. A good cardio routine can last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and is really intensive. The problem is that when you are on a cardio machine, you do the same thing over and over. What I am trying to say is that for most of us cardio gets boring after about five minutes. Don't lie, you know what I am talking about. The best I have ever heard about cardio is 'I don't mind it.' In other words, I get really bored, but I will keep doing it cause it works.

Being bored is horrible. Being Bored is even worse when you know you have another 25 min left and the seconds crawl by like eons. So what gives. Why does cardio have to be so boring? I think it's a

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safety issue. In the real world if you go running or play soccer for example, your environment and all its inputs are constantly changing; you run by different scenery, you miss the shot on goal. These changing characteristics are what make the whole process fun. In the gym, however, since space is limited, you have to do your cardio rooted to one spot. Very little happens to your environment to elevate the boredom. Imagine though, if you could have all the excitement of a soccer game while sitting on a recumbent health cycle? At first you may think it's a great and fun idea. No more boring cardio! Think about it and it becomes a little terrifying. The sheer amount of stimuli hitting you from all angles, your mind would exhaust quickly and you would run the risk of injury (not to mention getting overwhelmed). That is why cardio machines are so boring. They design them to be boring so you don't hurt yourself. So when you climb up onto your favorite elliptical trainer, remember that it's boring for a reason.

What can we do to make cardio more fun? Being new to the world of the gym I think I have some neat ideas to make cardio a more exciting activity. Ok that's a lie. I don't have any way to make cardio more exciting, but I do think there are some techniques to make the cardio experience pass more quickly, which, when you think about it, is the next best thing. I really try to distance my mind from my body. I try to unplug. I daydream, listen to loud music and think about my shopping list. For a whole week I designed a basement apartment for my house. It was quite the undertaking. Really focus on not thinking about time. Cover up the timer, know where the near by clocks are and avoid looking at them. Do what ever it takes to detach your self from the realm of the here and now. Remove yourself from our world governed by the second hand. Slip into recesses of your mind and tune out. While the cardio

won't go away at least you can distract yourself. Cardio machines make cardio boring and boring cardio is hard to stick with. Take comfort in knowing that your body loves the attention of a good cardio workout.

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package to help people lose weight quickly,

naturally and effectively. Visit the site by going to...<http://www.zizzoo.com/guides/loseweight/index.php>

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