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**Why Your Cardiovascular Workouts Might Be A Big Waste Of Your Time**

**By Jesse Cannone**

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What if I were to tell you that most if not all of the cardiovascular exercise you do was worthless? Well, guess what... over 50% of the people who perform cardio in an attempt to burn fat are wasting their time... hours and hours of it! Are you one of them?

Before you call me crazy, let me explain. I'm not saying that cardiovascular exercise can't or doesn't burn fat; it's just that most people are not performing the right type of cardio workouts. Before I get into the details, let me first cover some of the basics.

Just like anything in life, if you want to be successful you must do two things:

1. Know what you're doing (or learn); be knowledgeable
2. Have a plan (detailed/well thought out)

**How Cardio Exercise Affects Your Body**

Well, I'm going to make sure that after reading this today you will be able to do both. So let's start with your knowledge. It's critical that you understand how your body works and what happens when you exercise.

The human body is constantly burning a mix of fuels or energy sources: fat and glycogen. Glycogen is energy stored in muscle cells that is primarily used during intense muscle contractions. Some examples of these intense muscle contractions would be strength training, running, hard physical work, etc. So basically, during low to moderate activity levels, your body first uses what's in the blood stream and then uses primarily fat.

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When you are highly active you use more glycogen and less fat. You are probably wondering what all this has to do with you and your cardio workouts... right? Well, it matters... a lot!

There are different benefits of different level of activity. Let me explain to you the system use, why I use it, and why it's the most effective. I recommend three basic level of cardiovascular exercise:

Level 1: Long easy workout (ex. walking 60 minutes)

Level 2: Moderate intensity / moderate time (ex. fast walk 45 minutes)

Level 3: Short, hard workout (ex. running 20 minutes)

NOTE: It doesn't matter what activity or piece of equipment you choose. All that matters is that you get to the desired level.

Let's talk about what happens at each of the three levels. When exercising at the Level 1 pace, your body burns more calories from fat, HOWEVER the total number of calories is small. In order for you to burn a lot of body fat at the easy level you would need to do it for hours at a time! Not too practical is it? This is not to say there aren't benefits because there are...it's just not the best choice when it comes to fat loss. The primary benefit is increased blood flow and circulation, which means you'll feel better, you'll recover more quickly, and you'll be healthier in general.

Ok, let's talk about Level 2 now. At this level you burn more calories but less are from fat. Moderate work will result in a larger increase in metabolism than the easy Level 1 and will last 2–6 hours in most cases. You also get the benefits of increased blood flow but you also have to remember that it's a bit more stressful than Level 1. The main benefit, or I should say possible benefit is increased endurance (cardio/respiratory) IF your workouts are progressive (challenge the body's systems to work harder over time nearly each workout if possible).

Last but not least Level 3. At this level you burn the most calories per unit of time. You also burn less fat during the workout, but the plus side is you deplete muscle glycogen which means you'll be less likely to store "new" fat because any excess calories will be stored in the muscles instead. This type of workout also results in the largest increase in metabolism, which will generally last 4–24 hours or more.

The Level 3 workout is by far the most effective when it comes to fat loss for four reasons:

1. Burn more calories in less time
2. Largest increase in metabolism that lasts the longest
3. Helps to add and maintain muscle tissue
4. Depletes muscle glycogen which means you're less likely to store new fat

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So what's your goal? As you can see there are benefits at each level and how often you perform each workout should be based on your goals. You can get the benefits of all three but you must be cautious in how you structure your program. Here are some general guidelines to follow:

If your primary goal is:

Fat loss 1–3 Level 3 (10–20 mins) 1–2 Level 2 (20–30 mins) 1–2 Level 1 (40–60 mins) - Optional

Endurance 1 Level 3 (10–20 mins) 2–3 Level 2 (20–40 mins) 1–2 Level 1 (40–60 mins)

General Fitness 1 Level 3 (10–20 mins) 1–2 Level 2 (20–30 mins) 1–2 Level 1 (40–60 mins)

So to recap, you really need to know what your goals are, and what levels you need to be at and how often. On the following page is a chart that gives you the heart rate zones for all 3 of the workouts based on your age.

NOTE: If you are on blood pressure regulating medication you should first consult with your doctor and reduce the numbers by 10 each. If you are not currently exercising or have not exercised at the different levels before I advise you build up your intensity slowly.

### **Level 1**

### **Level 2**

### **Level 3**

Intensity

Long + easy

Moderate

Short + hard

Approx. time

30–60 mins

30–45 mins

10–30 mins

Benefits

Increased blood flow and circulation, general health benefits

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Increased cardio and respiratory endurance

Largest increase in metabolism, increased cardio and respiratory output

### Heart Rate Zones

Age

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

65

70

114–138

108–132

108–132

102–126

102–126

100–120

96–118

96–118

90–114

90–114

84–108

84–108

144–162

138–162

138–156

132–150

132–150

126–144

118–136

118–136

114–132

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114–126

108–126

108–120

162–185

162–180

156–176

150–168

150–168

144–162

136–154

136–154

132–152

126–150

126–150

120–138

Jesse Cannone is a certified personal trainer and author of the best-selling fitness ebook, *Burn Fat FAST*. Be sure to sign up for his free email course as it is full of powerful weight loss and fitness tips that are guaranteed to help you get the results you want.

### **Walking for Fat Loss???**

**By Jesse Cannone**

With obesity and disease increasing dramatically, many fitness experts are recommending walking for weight loss and fitness. Some are even going so far as saying that walking is the best way to burn fat and lose weight. I strongly disagree with this and am going to show you why walking is NOT effective at burning off body fat.

Yes, you read that correctly...

Walking is NOT effective at burning body fat and if your goal is fat loss you might be wasting your time. I am not saying that walking is not beneficial, I am saying that if fat loss is the primary goal, there are far better choices that will deliver far better results.

The primary benefits of walking are increased blood flow and circulation, improved recovery, and a strengthened immune system. There are several reasons why walking is not the best choice when it comes to fat loss. Here are just a few:

Walking does NOT burn a lot of calories

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The lower the intensity of the activity or exercise the smaller the number of calories burned per unit of time. For example, you can burn more calories in 15 minutes of bicycling at a high intensity level than you can in 45 minutes of easy walking.

Walking does NOT result in a large increase in metabolism

Another downside to walking is that because it's generally low intensity it results in only a small increase in metabolism that will only last approximately 1–2 hours after the walk. On the other hand, metabolism increases are larger and last longer (4–24 hrs or more) when you perform high intensity cardio workouts.

Walking does NOT deplete muscle glycogen

Low intensity exercise like walking does not deplete muscle glycogen levels and therefore, later that day if you have excess calories they will likely be stored as body fat whereas if you deplete the glycogen the excess calories will primarily be stored in the muscles.

So why then do so many fitness and health experts recommend walking for weight loss? One reason is that people don't want to hear that they have to work hard so they figure some activity is better than none. Another reason is that the body burns more fat for fuel when exercising at an easy pace, however, the total amount of energy used is so small that you end up burning off little body fat. That's also why when you choose the "fat burning" program on your treadmill or bike it has you exercise at any easy level. Yes, you're burning fat, but so little that you'd have to exercise at that easy pace for hours and hours each day.

High intensity cardiovascular/aerobic exercise is much more effective in burning off the excess body fat. In fact, several studies have been done to prove this. In one study they compared one group who did moderate level aerobics for 45 minutes with another group who performed high intensity workouts for 15 minutes. They did before and after fitness testing including body fat analysis and found that the group who performed the high intensity aerobics lost nine times as much body fat!

Want more proof?

Compare the bodies of a walker, marathon runner, and sprinter. If you are not familiar with what a sprinters body looks like, it is very muscular and has little body fat while on the other hand the body of a walker will likely have the opposite, little muscle and more fat. The sprinter does little or no low intensity exercise and does primarily short hard bursts of work while the marathoner overtrains so much they burn off both the body fat and the muscle and that's why they tend to look almost sickly thin.

So what should you do then if your main objective is to shed those excess pounds of body fat?

Two things: Perform some form of high intensity cardio 2–4 times per week Stabilize blood sugar to minimize the storage of new fat

I know some of you by now are saying "I can't do high intensity exercise, I have a bad knee" and don't

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worry, I have a solution for you. The good news is that high intensity is all relative to you and your current fitness level. For example, fast walking up and down hills may be high intensity for you... it all depends. So don't think that you have to start running or something like that. Just slowly start to increase the intensity of your cardio workouts while also maybe decreasing the time because you can either work hard or you can work long.

Also, you can make almost any activity or exercise high intensity.... here are a few examples: increase your speed use an incline or hills increase resistance perform intervals ( the most effective method)

Obviously, some exercises/activities are better suited than others but the point is if you want to burn more fat and make your workouts as productive as possible you need to increase the intensity.

To learn more about high intensity cardiovascular exercise please check out the following articles:  
Forget the Fat Burn Zone –

In Search of the Ideal Aerobics

Routine –

Heart Rate Guidelines –

Be sure to also check out my Burn Fat FAST! ebook and audio program here:

– it covers everything from cardiovascular training to strength training to nutrition and more.

As with any changes to your fitness program be careful and don't over do it. Just because high intensity workouts burn more fat, don't think that you'll get even better results by doing it everyday – that will quickly lead to over-training and a loss of muscle which will only make it even harder to burn off the fat.

So if your primary goal is fat loss, don't waste your time walking and instead focus on progressive, high intensity cardio to maximize the effectiveness of your workouts.

Jesse Cannone is a certified personal trainer and author of the best-selling fitness ebook, Burn Fat FAST. Be sure to sign up for his free email course as it is full of powerful weight loss and fitness tips that are guaranteed to help you get the results you want.

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