



Mix Up Your Exercise and Increase the Intensity to Keep Losing Weight

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Aerobic Exercise is helpful for weight loss. You burn calories while you are exercising and for about 4 hours after exercise your metabolism works at a higher rate. However, how you exercise makes a big difference.

Many people believe that the key to weight loss in exercise is to log mile after mile at a moderate to mild intensity. This is a myth. If one could get skinny from lots of long slow distance every one that ever ran a marathon would be rail thin. But that is not the case.

When you start a new exercise, your body works hard to adjust to it and the new level of training but as your body becomes more and more accustomed to the exercise, your body takes less and less energy to do it, meaning you become fitter to run those miles but you stop burning as many calories to do it.

So how can you trick your body to keep burning better?

Mix up your exercise and try new things. It is okay to have an exercise of choice but throw some other stuff in there from time to time. If you normally jog, try swimming or an aerobic class a couple of times a week. If you like to walk, try cycling instead of a couple walks. As your body deals with the demands of the new exercise it will keep burning calories.

Also try exercising in two shorter periods in the day. If you normally exercise for 40 minutes, break it up into two 20 minute sessions. This will give you the 4 hour calorie burn twice a day instead of just once and the total amount of calories you burn in two twenty minute sessions is the same as one 40 minute session.

What about fat burn?

Ever hear that you only start to burn fat after you have exercised over 20 minutes and that at lower intensity? While here's the scoop; while exercising at lower intensities for longer durations you do burn more fatty acids for energy. In shorter bouts you burn mostly carbohydrates as energy.

So isn't burning fat better? Remember, it is not whether or not you burn carbs or fat that makes the difference, it is the total amount of calories burned. Weight loss comes when you burn more calories a day than you take in regardless of rather or not they are fat calories, protein calories or carbohydrate calories. And remember that fat lose is more important than weight loss. When you are working out hard you may be gaining muscle which means you may not lose as much weight as expected¹ but you will lose size.

High intensity exercise burns calories the fastest and keeps your metabolism high the longest. Does pushing yourself harder sound intimidating? It doesn't have to be. Interval training is one of the best things you can do to increase intensity and fitness without killing yourself. It has also been shown to burn more calories than any other type of exercise. How to do it, simply exercise as normal but throw into the mix a few 1 minute durations of intense harder effort flowed by 1-2 minutes of slowing down and recovering and then doing it again. This gets your heart rate up and allows you to get fit faster and burn more calories. And don't forget to follow a good healthy calorie reduced diet in any effort to lose weight.

Black Hills Health and Education Center is a medical wellness retreat offering wellness programs and lifestyle change in a beautiful setting of the Black Hills in South Dakota. BHHEC is unique in that it offers a Christian based lifestyle program that includes everything from lodging and meals, physicals and comprehensive blood work, to daily treatments, exercise sessions with a personal trainer in the gym, classes presented by physicians, the Dietician, the Fitness Director, and other staff, cooking classes, sightseeing tours (Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Custer State Park Wild Animal Game preserve) and aquatics classes at the lovely swim center in Rapid City. Also included are counselling and stress-relief classes.

¹ See the article "Don't Let the Scale Weigh You Down!"