

**EVERYTHING You
Wanted To Know
About Exercise And
Weight Loss**

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WHY INTERVAL TRAINING IS THE BEST FORM OF CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE FOR BURNING CALORIES AND LOSING WEIGHT!

First off let me just say that any and every form of cardiovascular exercise will burn calories. But wouldn't it be great to learn there is something you can do to keep burning as many calories as possible even after your workout is over?

Go faster to burn more calories. That's it right there. That's the secret. Going faster for intermittent bouts during your cardio work is called *interval training*.

So many of you have been told that there is a "fat-burning" zone and in order to lose weight you need to train in that zone.

Nonsense!

Part of that is true; there is such a thing as a "fat-burning" zone.

Do you have to train in that zone to lose weight? NO.

Is it the best way to lose weight? NO again.

Let's go over that right now.

When you exercise at a low intensity, somewhere around 60-70% of your maximum heart rate, most of the calories you burn off will come from fat.

That's why on some cardio machines you see at the gym, most notably the TM, they have pre-set programs and one is almost always a "fat-burning" program.

This is the program that has you go at a slow speed for a long time.

Like I said, that part is true.

By going at a slower speed, most of the calories you burn will come from fat.

But what they don't tell you is that this is not the best way to burn the **MOST** calories.

So get the whole "fat-burning" thing out of your head now.

Let's focus now on how you can burn the most calories from your cardio exercise.

It's just the opposite of the long, slow "fat-burning" zone.

In order to burn the most calories you should increase the intensity.

In everyday terminology this means GO FASTER!

Let's look at how this works.

When you exercise at a higher intensity, or a faster speed than you are accustomed to, your heart rate is higher and in turn you burn more calories (especially after your workout is over).

Even though more calories from fat will be burned at a longer, slower pace, you will burn more calories **TOTAL** from a faster pace.

Let's say you go out for a somewhat easy run for 45 min. In that run you keep your heart rate at 70% of your maximum heart rate.

You think to yourself, "Great, I've just burned a lot of calories and they mostly came from fat since I was in the fat burning zone."

Now let's say on another day you went for a run but decided to cut it a little shorter, let's say 40 min., and did some interval training and got your heart rate up much higher than 70%.

Training this way, you will burn more calories total than you did at the slower pace.

And like I've said, losing weight is merely a matter of burning more calories than you take in.

Don't be concerned with *where* those calories are coming from.

What you do want to make sure of is that you are not burning lean muscle.

That's one reason that strength-training is so important. It prevents you from losing lean muscle.

A combination of a strength training program and cardio will ensure that your weight loss is fat weight and not lean muscle.

I went a little off topic there with the weight lifting; I just want to make sure you are aware of how important it is to do both the weights and the cardio.

Let's get back to cardio and how to go about pumping up the intensity.

A lot of you might be thinking 2 things right about now;

- I can barely go much faster than a walking pace right now, how can you expect me to go any faster?
- I don't know anything about heart rate and percentages of maximum hear rate, so how fast will I know how to go?.

Let me also say that what we're talking about applies to all forms of cardio, whether it's walking, biking, running, swimming, etc.

I'm going to use walking/running as my example here.

Let's address that first concern right now.

This one is easy.

Remember the old saying that you have to crawl before you can walk?

We'll start out with a person who can only walk at this point and we'll work our way up from there.

What we're going to talk about now is *interval training* in action.

If you go for a 30 min. walk at a nice leisurely pace, what you can do is increase your speed slightly every 5th minute.

It will be easier if we use the treadmill for this example.

Let's say you walk on the treadmill for 30 min at a speed of 3.5.

Using the interval training method, you would increase your speed to 4.0 at the 5th minute mark and keep it there until you reach the 6th minute mark. Once you hit the 6th minute you bring the speed back down to 3.5.

The pattern would be as follows:

Start to 5th minute = 3.5
 5th minute to 6th minute = 4.0
 6th minute to 10th minute = 3.5
 10th minute to 11th minute = 4.0
 11th minute to 15th minute = 3.5
 15th minute to 16th minute = 4.0
 16th minute to 20th minute = 3.5
 20th minute to 21st minute = 4.0

21st minute to 25th minute = 3.5

25th minute to 26th minute = 4.0

26th minute to 30th minute = 3.5

Let's look at a couple of reasons why this is beneficial.

First off as you can see, it's not physically over demanding.

Out of the 30 minutes, only 5 minutes are spent at the higher speed.

And for that reason also, it is not too tough to handle mentally.

The mental part, or what I like to call "mental intimidation", is what often prevents a lot of people from "kicking it into high gear".

By training this way, you know that even though you are at the high speed for 1 minute it is still only 1 minute and you will be able to recover at the slower speed very soon.

As I said this can be applied to any form of cardio exercise, even popular equipment found at fitness centers such as elliptical machines, steppers, rowers, etc.

You can also put this to work outdoors, whether it's walking, running, biking or even swimming.

If you are going outdoors it is helpful to use a watch. This way you know when you need to increase the speed.

With today's high-tech watches you can even set it to go off every 5th minute so you don't have to constantly look down to check it.

Of course, by training outdoors like this, it's up to you to bump up the pace. There are no buttons to push like there are on fitness center machines that will force you to go faster.

In keeping with this type of training, let's say you enjoy bike riding. All you would do here is pedal faster every 5th minute.

Let me also say that the goal here with this type of training is not to go all out, 100% for that 5th minute, but just increase your speed slightly.

You want to increase your effort enough that you feel like you are pushing yourself, but not too much that you can't sustain it for the full minute, or whatever duration you choose.

A lot of people make that mistake.

Every 5th minute they think they should go all out, full speed. You won't last through the workout this way and probably end up discouraged.

Don't let that happen.

Push yourself, but don't overdo it!

As good as the "5th minute" increase of speed is, it's not the only way to do interval training.

The options are endless, especially if you are outdoors, just be as creative as you like.

You might decide to walk a little faster every time you come to a telephone pole.

Or if you are walking at a pretty good pace to begin with, maybe you can break out into a little jog or run every time you come to a street light.

The nice thing about this is that it's almost like playing little games with yourself and it takes your mind off of the actual intense part of the walk, run, bike, etc.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be every 5th minute, not does it have to last for 1 minute.

If you're just starting out you can simply do every 10th minute for 10 seconds.

What is so great about this is it's very easy to make progress.

Using the above as an example, you might one day feel that you can go for 20 seconds instead of just 10.

And as time goes on, you might decide that you can increase the pace every 7th or 8th minute instead of every 10th minute.

Before you know it the time you spent at your "fast pace" will become faster and longer and the time spent at your "normal" or "slower" pace will become shorter.

I would not recommend that you do this every single time you do your cardio.

Doing it too often can become somewhat physically challenging, especially as you get into it a little more.

The main point that you should take with you after reading this article is to pump up the intensity during your cardiovascular workouts.

It's a great way to make your cardio sessions more intense, more enjoyable, and your progress will come easier and faster.

All this adds up to a fun, enjoyable, effective cardio session.

So don't be afraid to push the envelope a little the next time you set out on your daily walk or run.

You'll be surprised at what you can actually do.

The sky's the limit – Push Yourself!

STRIVE FOR FIVE

Why Eating At Least FIVE Meals A Day Is The Answer To Permanent Weight Loss

This is a very debatable topic right here – Food!

Let's take a look at a lifestyle plan (remember, DIETS DON'T WORK!) that is guaranteed to have you eating healthier, speeding up your metabolism and losing FAT in the process! Sounds great, doesn't it?

I'm talking about eating small meals throughout the day. Or what I refer to as "Lifestyle Eating".

Some of you may have heard of this before, and for others this is completely new. Even if you have heard of this, continue reading as I'll show you how this can easily be accomplished.

The days of eating just the big three are over: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Now I'm not saying that you shouldn't eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. They just need not be big meals, as they are for most people. This new way of eating might seem very foreign to you and might take a little time to get used to.

The typical schedule for eating smaller meals throughout the day will look a little something like this: Small meals at 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Depending on your work schedule, family, etc., you might not be able to eat at the exact times listed above. For instance, you might start work at a much later or earlier time. If this is the case, just adjust accordingly and try to have a "small meal" every 3 to 3-1/2 hours. The goal is to have anywhere from 5 to 6 "small meals" a day. I feel that 5 is a reasonable goal to shoot for.

Why This Works

"How in the world can I eat more times throughout the day and lose weight?" That's what you're probably asking yourself right now, isn't it? I will let you know why this works in the simplest way I know how. No scientific medical terminology, just the straight facts.

When you eat small meals throughout the day you are speeding up your metabolism, which helps you burn more calories. People with fast metabolisms are relatively thinner than people with slow metabolism. The thing is that most people don't know that they can "speed" their metabolism up. A good way to do this is by eating more often throughout the day and not just eating breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Often times I'll hear people say when they lose weight "I skipped eating my dinner at night and I've lost 10 lbs." That might be true and cutting out any one of your meals might work for a little while. But in the long run, this will not work. Sooner or later you will go back to eating your dinner or whatever meal you cut out and your body will begin to store that extra meal as fat fearing that you might decide to cut out that meal again in the future. Remember, the body adapts to whatever you throw at it. If it senses that you are starving it (which is what it will sense if you cut out a meal) it will adjust accordingly and start to store food away to compensate for the reduced calories it is now experiencing.

Okay, back to eating more throughout the day. I want you to follow along with me here. I want you to pretend that your stomach is a separate person than the rest of your body. If you were able to hear your stomach talk, this is that you might hear it say if you were eating only 3 big meals a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"Here we go again, breakfast, lunch and dinner. I'm going to start holding onto all these meals. There's no use in "burning off" these meals, they're few and far between. You give me breakfast at 7:00 a.m. and then I don't get lunch until 12 noon, and then I don't get dinner until 6:00 p.m. I'll have to hold onto them until you can give me a reason to burn them off."

I'll tell you what you might hear your stomach say if you fed it every 3 to 3-1/2 hours. "This is great, I just got lunch at 12 noon and since I know I'm getting that next small meal at 3:00 p.m., I'll just burn off my lunch. There's no reason to hold onto any of these meals. I'm being fed every 3 hours. I'm never "starving", and for that reason I never overeat.

The bottom line is the more meals you eat throughout the day the more efficient your body becomes at burning off these meals. Just the opposite applies when you don't eat very often throughout the day. Your body goes into a mode of "starvation" and "holds" onto each and every meal, fearing that next meal will not be for a very long time.

Some of you on the other hand might say, "Well often times I'll eat lunch at 12 noon and come dinner time I'm still not really that hungry, why should I eat now, that sounds crazy?" The answer to that is very simple; to speed up your metabolism.

So for those of you who feel you have slow metabolisms, or those of you who feel you need to stop eating in order to lose weight, the answer lies in; Lifestyle Eating. I also like to refer to this lifestyle eating plan as "Kevin's Strive for Five". You would optimally aim to eat five to six times a day, but start with trying to eat at least five.

That's very important also – as I mentioned earlier, it's a lifestyle, not a diet. So if someone asks, "What's that new diet you're on"? Simply tell them, "It's not a diet, it's how I'm eating all the time from now on and I don't ever plan on "going off" of it.

What exactly is a "Small Meal?"

This is probably a question you've had since the beginning of the article and I'll cover that in just a minute. I just want to first say that all of the meals throughout the day need to be healthy—I'm not recommending a cheeseburger and fries as one of your meals. But remember, healthy foods are delicious and they're not limited to just tofu and cottage cheese, there's plenty of options out there and we'll get to them in a little bit.

Remember also I cannot give exact sizes and calories of meals because a 300 lb. woman is going to eat very differently than a 180 lb. woman. The idea is still the same, small meals throughout the day, but the size of the small meals will be a little different.

One great piece of advice that will really answer the question of the size of the meal is that you should eat each meal until you are satisfied (notice I said SATISFIED and not FULL, there is a difference). Once you are satisfied, you stop eating and do it again in 3 to 3 ½ hours. Your body will become so in tune with this that you won't even need to be around a clock and you'll know when it's time for another meal (your stomach will growl, which is really your metabolism saying it needs more fuel). When you first start eating this way there will be some trial and error and you'll do some guessing as to what is the proper serving size for you. But in a little while you'll come to know exactly how much food you need.

How many times have you eaten lunch or dinner and walked away from the table feeling completely stuffed? I know I have plenty of times. The reason you don't want to feel this way is because:

- a) that means that you've probably consumed too much.
- b) your next "small" meal is only 3 to 3-1/2 hours away. You don't need to eat like this is your last meal.

The biggest obstacle you might have is cutting down on the amount you eat at dinner. Breakfast and lunch also, but most people consume most of their calories at dinner. But when you have those "small meals" in the morning and afternoon, you won't be as hungry come lunch/dinnertime, and that will prevent you from having a large meal at those times.

That's why the name small meal is used. It takes away the perception of the big 3 that we've mentioned – breakfast, lunch and dinner. Instead of these being the normal large portion meals of the day, they now become 3 of the 5 to 6 small meals that you have.

That brings me to my next point and something that might take you a little longer to get used to. I want to break down the “small meals” even further and suggest that once you get the hang of eating 5 to 6 times a day, here’s another strategy that will help you out even more. Try and have a lean protein, a starchy carbohydrate and a fibrous carbohydrate with each meal. Let’s look at the breakfast example on the previous page. The egg whites are the lean protein, the red pepper is the fibrous carb, and the whole grain bread is the starchy carb.

So the goal is to attempt to get one item from each of the 3 categories in each meal, and the meals should be pretty close to equal in size. That means the piece of grilled chicken (lean protein) should be about the same size as the baked potato (starchy carbohydrate) which is the same size as the serving of broccoli (fibrous carbohydrate).

There are also some strategies you can use to further enhance your fat loss. One of those strategies is to cut back on your starchy carbs as the day goes on. So that means you will have most of your carbs during your meals before lunch and then keep having less and less after lunch so by the time you get to dinner and any meal thereafter, you are just eating protein and almost no carbs. This strategy and others like it would occupy a whole book, more than anything I just want you to grasp the concept of eating 5 to 6 times a day.

Now remember, you might not be able to get to a meal every 3 – 3-1/2 hours right off the bat, and you might not be able to get a portion of each type of food right away. All I’m asking is that you try and do better than what you are currently doing. If you can do that each week, you’re guaranteed to see an improvement and it won’t be long until you’ve mastered the art of lifestyle eating and it becomes as routine as putting your clothes on before you leave the house.

One final note: Always keep in mind that this is not intended for someone who wants to lose weight really fast. Losing fat, getting stronger, etc. is a gradual process that needs to be done over time. No “quick fixes” here. Just a guarantee of a faster metabolism and skinnier jeans!

CAN WOMEN GET BULKY FROM LIFTING WEIGHTS? *SLIM CHANCE*

Strength training or weight lifting is the lifting of weights and/or resistance in a prescribed manner as an exercise or in athletic competition. Notice I said weights and/or resistance. It doesn't have to necessarily be a weight plate or a dumbbell. There are numerous TV reports, magazine articles, radio shows that explain all of the benefits of lifting weights, yet so many women seem to not be "hitting the weights" for one reason or another. One very good reason is that they don't know how much lifting weights will actually change their body (more so than even running or any of the other cardiovascular activities). Another reason is that a lot of women are confused about what to do exactly (what exercises, how many repetitions, how many sets, etc.).

This article will help shed some light on why it is so important that every woman be involved and adhering to a strength training program.

You actually might be involved in a strength-training program right now. Even if you are, I want you to really pay attention to what we're going to cover for the rest of the article. I'm sure it is going to have you thinking differently about why you should be lifting weights from now on.

We're going to talk about why developing a strength training program will ultimately help you lose weight, add some muscle tone, look better and feel better about yourself. We will go over some "myths" about strength training and the real facts behind them. So, whether you're new to strength training or you've been doing it for years, pay close attention.

Myths

Let's first clear up some of the misconceptions about strength training and the truth behind these myths. This first myth is the "biggie" and it has prevented many women from strength training. It sounds a little something like this; "I don't want to lift weights because I don't want to get bulky."

Let's explore that myth a little. When you think of weight lifters, you probably think of body builder's, right? You think of the men and women on ESPN parading around in little swimsuits with big bulky muscles popping out all over the place.

There are three reasons for this:

- 1.) These people are an extremely minute percentage of the population.
- 2.) That is their livelihood and they spend 4 to 5 hours a day in the gym.
- 3.) Most of them are using performance-enhancing drugs (steroids, etc.) to look like that.

So if you can get that image of the "bodybuilder" out of your head and think in terms of the average everyday person, you will see why the myth about getting bulky is just that, a myth!

What we're going to talk about next is simple. When you lift weights your body builds muscle. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn (even at rest). The more calories you burn the less you weigh. Let me give you an example of this that might make it a little easier to understand.

Let's say two women are sitting on the couch watching some T.V. Woman #1 strength-trains 3 times a week, but woman #2 does not. After an hour of watching T.V goes by, who will have burned more calories? The common answer to that would be that they both burned the same (almost nothing), since they were just sitting and not moving.

But the actual answer would be that woman #1 burned more calories, and I'll tell you why for one simple reason. **THE MORE MUSCLE YOU HAVE THE MORE CALORIES YOU BURN!!** Now you might say to yourself, "But if I lift weights, my muscles will get bigger, I will appear big and bulky, and wind up weighing more." This is also a myth.

That myth being one of the most popular in the world of exercise, which is, "muscle weighs more than fat."

That's like the old joke, "What weighs more--10 lbs. of steel or 10 lbs. of feathers?" Hopefully by now you know that the answer to that question is that they both really weigh the same. 10 lbs. is 10 lbs. no matter what it is made of. Let's examine this point in a little more detail.

Muscle is much more compact than fat. It actually takes up less space than fat does because of its density. That makes sense, right? Fat, on the other hand, is very soft and jelly-like and occupies more space than muscle does.

Let me give you another example to clarify this a little more.

If you were to take 10 lbs. of fat and 10 lbs. of muscle and roll each of them into a ball, the 10 lbs. of fat might be the size of a bowling ball. In comparison, the 10 lbs. of muscle would be about the size of a baseball. Now let's use this as a real life example using woman #1 and woman #2 in an example again. Let's say for arguments sake, both women are 5' 5" tall and both weigh 140 lbs. Woman #2 does not lift weights or do any kind of strength training. Her dress size is a size 12. Woman #1 on the other hand lifts weights and follows a strength-training program each week. Her dress size is a size 8. If these women were standing side by side people would definitely think that woman #1 weighed less than woman #2. But in reality they both weigh exactly the same.

How can that be?

Think of what I said before, muscle takes up less space than fat. Of those 140 pounds that each woman weighs, what's the percentage of fat and muscle on each woman? I would venture to guess that woman #1 has a very low body fat percentage and woman #2 has a much higher body fat percentage. How did woman #1 get such a low percentage of body fat? Two words—STRENGTH TRAINING (in addition to cardio exercise and eating healthy, but this article is just touting the immense benefits of strength training).

That brings up another good point I'd like to make. The weighing scale is the worst indicator of losing FAT. It will tell you that you've lost weight, it's great at that. But what if you lose 10 pounds of fat and replace it with 10 pounds of muscle? Will you have lost weight? According to the scale, NO! Will you have lost FAT? Absolutely, and I guarantee that your clothes will be a lot looser on you and you will look a lot better. If you can do one thing with your scale I would recommend throwing it in the garbage, or at least getting rid of it.

Well all right, you say, "I'll lift weights, but I'm only lifting light weights and doing lots of repetitions."

This is another mistake a lot of you are making. This is not the 'wrong' way to lift, but it is certainly not the only way to go about strength training if your goal is weight loss. There is and should be a place in your fitness program for higher repetitions, but it shouldn't be the only thing you do with weights.

Women do not have enough of the male hormone, testosterone, to get big muscles. You probably couldn't even get big and bulky if you tried to. So, is it all right for you to lift heavy weights with fewer repetitions? ABSOLUTELY!!

Let's take a moment now to recap some of the main ideas to take away from this article:

- Lifting weights will not make you bulky (it will make you leaner and more toned).
- Muscle is more compact and denser than fat and actually takes up less space than fat.
- The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn (even at rest!).
- Every good strength training program should include light weights with more repetitions and heavier weights with fewer repetitions.

HOME WORKOUT VS. GYM WORKOUT

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

You pull into the parking lot to find that there are no spots left. Once you do park and get inside you see that it is very crowded and not only are all of the machines in use but the only treadmill that's available is not working. Does this sound familiar?

In this brief article I will explain to you how and why setting up a small gym in your home is one of the easiest and wisest things you will ever do.

Before we get into the actual training benefits of a home gym let's discuss some of the things mentioned in the very first paragraph. Your own home gym is always going to be right there for you open 24 hours a day and even on holidays, you'll never have to wait to use a piece of equipment, it will always be clean (provided you keep it that way) and you did not have to pay a monthly membership fee to use it. And that's without mentioning that you don't have to deal with the annoying people that do nothing more than socialize and talk your ear off while you're trying to work out (I'm assuming you're one of those annoying people!).

Since we've covered the obvious "extra" benefits of home workouts let's talk about how and why working out at home is the best thing you can do to change your body.

The main reason is functionality. Assuming you don't have a home gym full of machines and all you have is a bench, free weights, etc. then you're in business. Now that's not to say that machines are bad and you shouldn't use them for some exercises. But if you want to get the most out of your workout you're better off with a simple bench, barbell, free weights and stability ball (on a side note you could probably get all of these pieces of equipment for the price of one machine).

When you workout on machines you're usually sitting down and only using the targeted muscle. The reason for this is because exercise machines are designed in such a way that only allows you to push the weight in a set path or set direction, thus only using the targeted muscle.

Just the opposite happens when using free weights. During free weight exercises (dumbbells or bars and weight plates) you are forced to balance the weights thus forcing you to use more of your muscles including the supporting muscles. L

Let's look at an example: doing a chest press sitting down on a machine that you would find in most gyms with your back supported. This chest press machine does little more than just work your chest muscle. On the contrary, when you do the chest press

with dumbbells lying on a stability ball you now have to balance the weight in each hand causing you to call on the supporting muscles like the shoulders and triceps. You will also use your core (abdominal muscles and low back) and your legs to help keep you balanced on the ball.

Which way do you think will give you more of a workout?

Looks like the free weights to me.

Remember the chest press is just one example. This applies to a lot of other exercises as well. This is not to say that you can't do free weight exercises at the gym. Of course you can. But as I mentioned earlier you run the risk of getting stuck in traffic on the way, the gym being very crowded, running into that girl that always wants to chat, etc.

Why not get all the benefits of a great functional workout that will get you the results you want in the comfort of your own home?

Let's now talk about the specifics on what you should have in your home gym. Of course depending on your financial situation you might be able to get a little more than we mention here, but this is really all you need.

The first thing you need is a bench (preferably one that inclines and declines). You most definitely need a few pairs of dumbbells. Depending on how strong you are will determine the amount of dumbbells you need. Remember you can always get heavier weights as time goes on and you get stronger. A stability ball is also a great piece of equipment to have. This can be used for lots of exercises and you should look for a ball that is right for your height. This information is usually listed on the box of the ball. Another great thing to have it is a set of exercise bands. These bands are color coded and can be paired together to add tension and make the exercise harder. A great company that makes bands is Bodylastics. You can check them out that my web-site, www.thefitnessleader.com, on my "Products" page.

If you get more advanced and are looking for more diversity or a little more of a challenge you might want to consider purchasing a weight bar and weight plates. If you go to any of the national sporting goods stores like Sports authority, Modell's, etc. you can find a nice bench/weight bar combination "home gym" for usually under \$200 (on sale).

The other things mentioned are all relatively inexpensive. As of this writing stability balls are around \$30, the exercise bands come in a package that is a great value at under \$50. The most expensive item might be the dumbbells. Prices vary depending on style, weight, etc. But keep in mind; you won't have to deal with any more monthly membership fees, initiation fees, etc. In the long run you will be saving a lot of money.

So the next time you get stuck in traffic on the way to the gym or wind up next to the chatterbox ride on over to the sporting goods store and setup your home gym ASAP.

CIRCUIT TRAINING

Is It The New Fat Loss Weapon?

What's the one missing ingredient that a lot of people fail to include when trying to lose weight? I'll give you a hint, it's also the most important thing. Resistance training. Without a doubt, resistance training is the one thing you can do for yourself that will absolutely redesign your body and have you looking and feeling like a completely new person.

Just as with cardiovascular exercise, there are numerous ways to do resistance training. Add to that the endless amounts of equipment that can also be used. Machines, dumbbells, balls, bands, etc. All of these can make some people very confused and it might even scare them off entirely from getting started.

But my article is meant to clarify all of the confusion and show you how you can get started with minimal equipment right in the comfort of your own home. I'm even going to let you in on a secret to resistance training that will cut your time down and get you even better results than a traditional resistance training routine. "With that said, let's take a look at what a traditional resistance training routine looks like and the history behind it.

Traditional resistance training became popular in the mid-70's, early 80's. This was the era of Arnold Schwarzenegger and the rest of the steroid-taking, body-building "freaks". These men and women typically spend anywhere from 4 – 6 hours in the gym lifting weights. Their routines mainly consisted of doing a few exercises for each "body part". (Ex. Chest press, chest fly, bicep curl, etc.). They would do one set with very heavy weight, rest for a few minutes, then do another set, rest for a few minutes, etc.

They did this style of training because they were "body builders". Their main objective was to build their muscles up as much as possible. Losing weight, functioning, etc. did not matter to them.

The problem now was that the general public, you and I, saw that these men and women got great results from this. So that is what we started doing. No one told us that this kind of workout was not ideal for burning calories. No one mentioned that most of the bodybuilders spent 4 – 6 hours a DAY working out. No one said that most of the bodybuilders were taking steroids.

I should also mention that these training methods were done over 30 years ago! Haven't there been any updates since then?? If so, why are most people still doing traditional style resistance training workouts? My answer to that is that most people are still being misinformed. But not you. Not now. You are going to have the knowledge of knowing what you need to do to put your resistance training into the future, head and shoulders above most other people. And you are going to get maximum results in minimum time.

I now introduce you to the world of circuit training. Circuit training is the act of doing anywhere from 3 to 6 exercises in a row without resting. I should also add that a lot of the exercises will be based on movements and not specific “body part: exercises.

A typical circuit might be: squat, overhead press, standing row. You would do these 3 exercises in a row, then rest for 60 seconds. You would then do the 3 exercises again, rest and then do them one more time. That’s just a quick example. You can add more exercises, change the length of the rest period, do 4 exercises instead of 3, do 4 circuits instead of 3, etc. The possibilities are endless.

What I want you to take away from this article more than anything is that by doing a circuit style workout you are increasing something known as EPOC. EPOC stands for Excess Post-exercise Oxygen Consumption. In layman’s terms this basically means how long your body continues to burn calories once your workout is over. Everyone always gets so caught up in how many calories they are burning for just the workout session. How about the amount of calories you are burning for the other 23+ hours of the day. Isn’t that important? You better believe it is! Circuit style training has been shown in some studies to increase EPOC for as long as 38 hours after the exercise session. Can you imagine that---**38 HOURS!** Traditional training doesn’t even come close to that. The reason being is that there is not a lot of resting or “waiting” in between sets and exercises with circuit style training. You go from one exercise to the next and you keep your heart rate elevated, thus making the exercise session more intense and more efficient.

As I said earlier another great benefit is you can do this workout at home with minimal equipment. All you really need is dumbbells (make sure to get heavy enough weights, the stronger you get the heavier you’ll need), an exercise ball, and exercise bands. Once you have the equipment you need it’s just a matter of setting everything up before your workout so you can go from one exercise to the next with no time being wasted setting everything up during the workout. Of course you can also do this kind of workout in a gym. It just might be a little tougher because you have to worry about other people using the equipment that you might need for your exercises.

One final note; circuit style training can and should be very challenging. Typical training routines more times than not aren’t very challenging (at least the way most people do them) and that’s why a lot of people don’t get such good results. Keep in mind though, as I said, circuit style training sessions are shorter and one of the reasons for that is because they are supposed to be pretty intense.

But remember, if the desired outcome is losing fat and redesigning your body, a little hard work is a small price to pay.

WHAT DOES KEEPING AN EXERCISE/NUTRITION JOURNAL HAVE TO DO WITH LOSING WEIGHT?

EVERYTHING!

From your exercise (strength training and cardio) to your food intake, keeping track of it all will surely lead to a quicker improvement in both of these areas, which in turn leads to a more successful weight loss. I GUARANTEE!

What do you mean by “keeping track of it”?

What I mean is simply writing down or recording every one of your workouts and all of the foods you eat.

It has been proven that people who keep a food journal are more successful with their weight loss program than people who don't.

It doesn't actually have to be written down.

It can be typed on a computer also.

I find it easier to write everything down because it's easy to just put it into a Food & Exercise Journal that you can take with you anywhere as opposed to having to be near a computer.

What exactly should be recorded?

For your exercises, you should write down the exercise performed, how much weight you are using, how many sets and how many reps.

Your cardio should include what mode (running, walking, biking, etc.) duration, distance covered, and heart rate (if you desire).

For your food intake, simply write down every meal you've eaten for the day and at what time.

Now let's look at exactly why this will help you lose weight in the long run.

First we'll cover the exercise part.

It is extremely important to remember how much weight you are lifting for each exercise as well as how many sets and reps.

Let's say for example that one day you increase your bicep curls from 10 to 12 reps, but you don't write this down.

Now keep in mind, this is just one of 12 exercises that you might be doing during your workout routine.

Now, you workout again 2 days later but can't seem to remember if you increased to 12 reps or 11 reps?

So what do you do? You do 11 because that's what you seem to remember doing. And right there is a great example of moving backwards and regressing because you never wrote down what you did.

This works just the same for the *amount* of weight you are lifting. And that's even harder to remember.

Let's look at a sample workout routine:

Wts./Reps

Chest Press	30/12	40/10	45/9	50/6	
Shoulder Press	10/15	15/12	20/12	25/9	30/7
Squats	32	25	18	15	
Bicep Curls	10/13	15/10	20/8	20/6	
Tricep Push Downs	20/12	25/10	30/8	35/7	35/6
Lat. Pull Down	45/15	55/10	60/8	60/6	60/6
Lunges	15 R&L	12R&L	12R&L	10R&L	
Crunches	25	22	17	15	

I don't know about you, but I have enough going on in my life and there's no way that I'm going to remember all of those numbers listed above.

I don't think you would be able to either.

And with a solid strength training routine you should be increasing these numbers every couple of weeks or so.

This makes it even harder to remember.

You want to make sure you are always at best lifting the same weight as you did the last time.

One sure way to slow down your progress and actually regress is not writing down your workouts and "guessing" how much weight you lifted last time or how many reps you did.

It doesn't take long to just write it down.

What some people do, myself included, is write down the weights, reps, and sets in between exercises.

This is a perfect time to jot down what you've just done.

Writing it all down also lets you look back at what does and doesn't work well for you.

You might look back a few months ago, at a time when you were in your best shape, and see exactly what exercises you were doing that helped you look and feel so good.

Maybe you were doing lunges and squats.

Now, after seeing this, you might want to incorporate them back into your program.

Looking back at your past workouts will also help to motivate you.

How motivating is it to see that 2 months ago you were doing 3 sets of the chest press at 40 lbs., and now you're doing 5 sets at 60 lbs.

This kind of thing shows you that all of the hard work you've put in to your exercise program really pays off.

And it motivates you to push yourself even more.

Does this work for cardio too?

Of course.

Simply write down mode (bike, running, etc.), duration, distance covered, and heart rate if you want to track that.

I find it helpful to also write down how I felt during my cardio session.

Just like with the weight training, it's important to keep track and remember exactly how fast you were going, or how many RPM's on the bike, etc.

It's good to write how you felt after each session because if you have a session that was too fast or too tough, you can write that down.

This way, right before you do your next workout, you can look back and know that you should maybe slow it down a little this time.

It also works the opposite way as well.

You might look back at your previous workout and see that you have written down "Felt good on Treadmill, next time increase speed from 5.0 to 5.3."

This serves as a motivator as well.

And believe me if you keep increasing the amount of weight you're lifting and going faster during your cardio sessions, you will lose weight.

And that's the biggest motivator of all.

What about writing down my food intake?

This is a biggie.

This is extremely important for you to do if you're serious about losing weight.

But to know what is and isn't working for you, you have to write down everything you eat each day.

If you only have 2 meals (which of course I do not recommend) then that's what you put.

If you have a salad with creamy ranch dressing with your dinner, then make sure you write that down.

I recommend that every couple of weeks you have a certified personal trainer or nutritionist look over your food journal.

The person you give it to might notice that you are eating too many carbohydrates, or drinking a lot of soda, or snacking on junk food too close to your bed time, etc.

They will then point this out to you and you can make the necessary adjustments to your eating plan.

Once you find an eating plan that works for you and you are losing weight, you can make sure that this is the way you should eat all of the time.

You'll also be less likely to eat junk food or eat too much at one sitting.

The reason for this is that you won't want to have to write it down in your journal.

It will make you feel guilty to write that down.

You'll feel almost as if you are reporting this to someone each week.

Even if you never show the journal to anyone, writing to yourself can be enough to keep you on the right track.

The most important thing though is to make sure that you write down **EVERY SINGLE THING** that you've eaten.

There are a few exceptions.

If one day out of the blue, you happen to pop a few peanuts in your mouth, you don't have to record that.

If you do that every day though, then that would be something you should write down.

It won't make sense to keep a food log unless you record all that you've eaten.

If you're not going to do that then don't waste your time.

It is only by writing everything that you will truly know what you need to change and what you see you are doing well with.

Another important thing to record is the time of day that you eat.

I've worked with women before and noticed on many occasions that they don't eat breakfast.

We all know that you should eat breakfast every morning.

Another thing I see is that a lot of women are spacing their meals too far apart (5 to 6 hours). You will slow down your metabolism this way, and that's not good if you're looking to lose weight.

“So how does writing down my meals prevent me from spacing them too far apart?”

You will hopefully first develop an eating plan that has you eating more frequently (5 to 6 small meals a day is optimal for increasing your metabolism and losing weight).

Then as time passes this will become second nature to you.

Then one day when you only write 2 entries in your food journal, it will seem like something's not right.

And something is definitely not right if you are only eating twice a day.

Another advantage to writing down the times is you can see what time of day is your “weak” point.

Maybe you'll notice that 3:00 p.m. is your “weak” point and you seem to snack on unhealthy foods.

Or maybe after looking at your journal for the last couple of weeks you notice that you're eating at 9 or 10 at night.

Whatever the case may be, the bottom line is that by writing down the times of your meals you will be able to pinpoint what time of day is the hardest for you. Or better yet, what time of the day are you eating the most or unhealthiest.

So as you can see, if your goal is to lose weight, you will find it a lot easier to achieve your goal by writing down your exercises (weight lifting and cardio) and your food intake.

I truly believe that writing things down can and will help you lose weight.

And losing weight can be difficult at times; so why not use everything to your advantage?

Don't wait another day. Write all of it down to lose all of the pounds!

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