

Cardiovascular Training

Aerobic exercise is a vital part of any training program, and yet many of us aren't sure of what type to do, for how long, or how often. As a personal trainer, I apply the FITT principles to any kind of physical activity – Frequency, Intensity, Time and Type.

Most of us should aim to do aerobic activity between three and five times per week, for 30-45 minutes per session. This means getting your heart rate elevated for a sustained period of time, and you should feel tired, but not flat-out exhausted, at the end of it. This brings us to the intensity of your cardio workout.

People new to exercise may want to stick to a moderate pace, still getting to fatigue, until these workouts become easy, and they notice that their results – cardiovascular endurance, weight lost – are plateauing. At this point I encourage clients to vary their cardio workouts both in intensity and duration, or time. First, I get the client's resting heart rate, and determine the range of elevated heart rate we're going for. Then I set them up into different types of cardio challenge, varying the type within the week. The client may be doing up to four types of cardiovascular challenge: Long Slow Distance, Continuous Interval, and Supramaximal Training. Here's what such a program might look like (the bpm – heart rate – is a suggestion and will change for each person).

AEROBIC

FITNESS STRATEGY

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|---|--|
| LSD (Long Slow Distance) 60-80 minutes: continuous aerobic exercise at moderate intensity bpm = 121-146 | Continuous Interval Training 30-60 minutes: alternate 3 minutes bouts of low and high intensity Low bpm = 51-67 High bpm = 134-152 |
| Tempo Training: 30-60 minutes continuous aerobic exercise at high intensity | Supramaximal Training: 15-20 supramaximal exercise bouts for 1 min., with 2-5 min. active rest between bouts (walking briskly to next cardio station or |

bpm = 159-177

going much more slowly on the same cardio exercise). Supramaximal = your top speed

| | WEEK 1 | WEEK 2 | WEEK 3 | WEEK 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>WARM-UP</p> <p>Stationary bike, treadmill, elliptical, low-moderate pace</p> | 7-10 min. | 7-10 min. | 7-10 min. | 7-10 min. |
| <p>AEROBIC ACTIVITY</p> | <p>Session 1:</p> <p>LSD (Long Slow Distance) 60-80 min:</p> <p>Bpm = 121-146</p> | <p>Session 1:</p> <p>Supramaximal Training:</p> | <p>Session 1:</p> <p>Continuous Interval training:</p> <p>Low bpm = 51-67</p> <p>High bpm = 134-152</p> | <p>Session 1:</p> <p>Tempo Training:</p> <p>Bpm = 159-177</p> |
| | <p>Session 2:</p> <p>Tempo Training</p> | <p>Session 2:</p> <p>LSD (Long Slow Distance)</p> | <p>Session 2:</p> <p>Supramaximal Training</p> | <p>Session 2:</p> <p>Continuous Interval training</p> |
| | <p>Session 3:</p> <p>Continuous Interval training</p> | <p>Session 3:</p> <p>Tempo Training</p> | <p>Session 3:</p> <p>LSD (Long Slow Distance)</p> | <p>Session 3:</p> <p>Supramaximal Training</p> |

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|--|---|---|---|--|
| | Session 4: Supramaximal Training | Session 4: Continuous Interval training | Session 4: Tempo Training: | Session 4: LSD (Long Slow Distance |
| | Get 150- 200 minutes total cardio (not counting warm-up time) per week | Get 150- 200 minutes total cardio (not counting warm-up time) per week | Get 150- 200 minutes total cardio (not counting warm-up time) per week | Get 150- 200 minutes total cardio (not counting warm-up time) per week |

As for the type of cardio activity to do, it's important to vary your challenges. If you enjoy cycling classes, recognize that this works the quadriceps and hip flexors particularly, and choose other activities, such as swimming, aerobic classes, kickboxing, elliptical, treadmill, snowshoeing or skiing to round out your cardio workouts. This is a good way to avoid overuse injuries of any particular muscle group.