



Cardio Training

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest misconceptions people have about exercise is that cardiovascular activity is the best way to burn fat. Every day I see people huffing and puffing on treadmills, elliptical, or bikes trying to lose weight. These cardio activities very seldom work which leads people to give up exercising completely and resign themselves to a life of obesity and frustration.

To understand why these activities are not effective fat burners we must examine our evolutionary history with regards to cardio. Guess what our primary source of travel was before the advent of motorized transportation? WALKING! The average human walked **12 miles a day** in search of food. So if you think those 30 minutes of hanging on a treadmill walking at 3 mph on a flat surface is going to burn off that fat gut, thunder thighs or huge butt you are dreaming! As a personal trainer, it amazes me how many people think that just because they did a 45 minute aerobic class twice a week they can eat whatever they want to and lose weight! Big news flash: cardio makes a 5% difference in your ability to lose weight. I have had clients lose 100 lbs doing absolutely no cardio. On the contrary, I have seen aerobics and spinning instructors that were grossly overweight despite teaching up to five classes a day. **CARDIO IS NOT AN EFFECTIVE FATBURNER!** So, you may ask, why do cardio at all? Cardio is good for your heart!

RUNNING MYTHS

There are a lot of misconceptions regarding running, so let's clear that up now. In our evolutionary history we only ran if something was chasing us or we were chasing after something else. If you knew ahead of time that you had to walk 12 miles in one day, would you make the decision to go for a run? The human body was not designed to run long distances. Now, there is the argument that people run marathons. True, and there are people who travel to space, but that does not mean the average person should do it. Running, especially if you are overweight, will destroy your knees and lower back long before you get in to shape. Remember we were designed to *walk*. Running consumes muscle tissue before it burns fat. When you exercise with high heart rate levels (> 130 beats per minute) your body tries to create the lightest load it can. Muscle weighs three times as much as fat so our bodies set out to destroy our muscle tissue quickly. Because muscle is responsible for driving your metabolism, the less muscle you have the more fat your body will store. Additionally, high intensity cardio skyrockets your appetite because your body needs more fuel to operate. Our bodies are very smart and will simply adjust our hunger levels to compensate for our calorie expenditures. This increase in appetite is why cardio fails every time. So let's stop foolish cardio methods and do what works!

HOW TO GET THE MOST OF YOUR CARDIO ROUTINE

How do we reap the heart benefits of cardio without burning off our muscle? Simple; walk uphill! Climbing an incline requires the use of muscle so your body will decide to preserve it. Light cardio work should be done **after** weight training. If you read my book you should know by now that the body only has two energy systems: blood sugar and body fat. Following my diet concepts, you should be on a fairly low carbohydrate diet. Carbohydrates convert to blood sugar; therefore, weight training will use up any residual blood sugar you have in your bloodstream. When you start the cardio portion of your workout your body will be using primarily fat for fuel, if done correctly. Now, this does not mean that weight training and cardio training on the **LFF 20/20** system can replace a healthy diet. A low carbohydrate diet is key to burning fat; cardio is for improving heart health. **LFF 20/20** Cardio Training: Climb on a treadmill and start walking at 2.0 to 2.5 mph. This speed should be a slow walk for most people. Check your heart rate, then increase the incline to 2% and continue walking. Now comes the hard part, **LET GO OF THE MACHINE!** Holding onto the machine cuts your effort level by 50 percent! Don't be discouraged if you find it difficult to keep balanced at first; like riding a bike, learning to walk will come back to you with ease! I want you to continue walking for 20 minutes. That's it! While walking an incline you are priming your body to burn fat the rest of the day. Obviously this routine works best in the morning or midday, but regardless of your schedule keep it up! Remember to monitor your heart rate; if it goes above 130 beats per minute, slow down your walk but keep the incline constant. As your heart becomes better conditioned you will elevate the incline, not the speed. When beginning **LFF 20/20** Cardio Training, start with 20 minutes of

cardio after your weight training sessions three days a week. Gradually increase your frequency of training and cardio to 5 days a week. Your goal over time is to be able to walk (hands-free) on 15% incline at 2.2 to 2.4 mph for 20 minutes while keeping your heart rate below 130 beats per minute. You will be cardio fit at this point!

DO I HAVE TO WALK?

Many people prefer to get their cardio exercise on an elliptical, cross trainer, or in an aerobic class. You may substitute these activities for walking as long as you realize your heart rate should not exceed 130 beats per minute. Most aerobic classes (i.e. step, boot camp, etc.) are designed to elevate your heart rate to an extreme level. Remember that high intensity cardio increases your appetite. If you are struggling with a food addiction (as all fat people are) you will have to monitor your caloric intake very strictly after aerobic classes. Do not allow yourself to develop the attitude of “I deserve this [insert favorite craving] because I worked so hard for it!” You will most likely consume 3 times as many calories as you “worked so hard” to burn off!

CLOSING REMARKS

Frequency outweighs effort when it comes to fat loss (no pun intended). The **LF 20/20** system is designed to be used 5 days a week. It is only a 40 minute/day investment in the single most important element in your life: YOUR HEALTH! So stop the excuses and get moving!