

How To Train Smart



“Those who think they have no time for exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness” ~ Edward Stanley

So much is written about exercise.

As I write this, I stare in amazement at my ever-growing training book collection stacking up on my shelf.

I remember buying the majority of them years ago in a quest to find that secret formula.

After all, doesn't everyone want to feel leaner, stronger and have more energy?

The most frustrating thing about most workout books and I'll include body building in that as well is that they are too complicated.

In my opinion they are targeted towards experienced weightlifters that are familiar with tempo, squat variations, supersets, tri sets and drop sets.

If you understand the mumbo jumbo, most are excellent and when followed to the letter work extremely well.

But if you're coming at this from a position whereby you haven't exercised for a while – certainly not at high intensity and you have a busy job, then these types of books may well be a bit advanced.

Build Strong Foundations

You've got to build some strong foundations first.

Get moving on a regular basis.



Start off with bodyweight exercises and light intensity cardio. Exercise for 20 – 30 minutes per day 3 times a week.

Typical (Unsuccessful) 4 – 8 Week Exercise Programme

Get out of shape and unfit over a period of months/years.

Something happens that triggers a wakeup call – could be an illness, health scare, death in the family, trousers not fitting anymore, comments from other people – whatever!

Urgent decision needs to be made to sort it out.

Join a gym, buy a home workout dvd, buy a book.

Figure out the best way to get in shape (we would rather do this ourselves than ask for professional help – it's a main thing. Just like buying a new bed and ignoring the instructions.

Totally commit, I mean literally chuck yourself into it 3, 4 or even 5 times a week of exercise.

60 – 90-minute workouts. You become obsessed.

Lose interest within 6-8 weeks as this intensity cannot be sustained. Once the momentum is lost.... You stop soon after.

IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE LIKE THIS!!

If you make full use of 365 you will find that you will get amazing results – smaller waist, more energy, less all over body fat % by only working out for 20 – 30 minutes each session for 3 – 4 days per week.

As long as the exercise is supported by the correct nutrition (which it is) This is crucial.

The reason so many people lose interest in a new exercise programme after 6 – 8 weeks is due to the lack of results.

And I totally get this.

After all it's in our nature to want to see some kind of reward for the effort we're putting in.

To get the rewards and results though you must put the effort in and be self-disciplined.

Which leads on to the importance of INTENSITY.

HIIT (high intensity interval training) or HIRT (high intensity resistance training) is a training technique in which you give all-out one hundred percent effort through quick, intense bursts of exercise, followed by short, sometimes active recovery periods.



This type of training gets and keeps your heart rate up and burns more fat in less time.

It is essential though that you put in 80-90% effort for the workout time and then rest during the rest period. Plodding along and going at 60% effort will not get you the results that you're looking for.

WHY DOES HIIT WORK?

First of all, it produces excess post oxygen consumption (EPOC) Basically this means that on the back of just one 20-minute workout your body will have a higher metabolism for 24 hours afterwards.

It's easier to stick to. The thought of blasting through a 20-minute-high intensity workout is much more appealing sometimes than doing a steady 45 – 60-minute run on the treadmill.

When time is against you it's perfect.

HIIT improves your VO2 Max, I know I said I wouldn't get all technical with the mumbo jumbo.

This is a really important point though...

VO2 Max is a numerical measurement of your body's ability to consume oxygen. So the higher this number is, the more oxygen your body can take in and therefore can be passed around your body to feed your muscles – enabling you to run faster, exercise harder, lift heavier etc.

Specific Action Steps

Write this down.

“I can easily manage my time in order to find between 20 – 30 minutes, 3 times per week so that I can complete the exercise part of this programme”

Here are two of my favoured training methods:

1. TABATA Training

What is TABATA Training?

Developed by the Japanese Speed Skating Coach Ozumi Tabata it involves a 4 minute workout of very short bursts of high intensity exercise followed by very short rest periods.

Traditionally the format looks like this:

- 20 Seconds x Very Hard Work
- 10 Seconds x Rest
- Repeat 8 times

There are numerous TABATA workout times to choose from these days such as:

30 seconds work - 15 seconds rest 30 seconds work – 30 seconds rest 40 seconds work – 20 seconds rest 50 seconds work – 10 secs rest

60 seconds work – 60 seconds' rest

Who should use TABATA training?

Tabata Training requires bursts of high intensity; beginners would need to go at their own pace initially and build up over time.

You would need to develop an exercise and cardio foundation first before attempting progressive workouts.

What are the benefits of TABATA Training?

Simply put you get a lot done in a very short period of time.

Research has shown that Tabata Training is more effective at improving your cardio capacity and inducing fat loss than longer steady cardio.

With long steady cardio you only benefit from calories burnt during the workout, but with Tabata training the big benefits are delivered for hours afterwards.



What are the best exercises to use in a TABATA?

The best Tabata exercises are full body reciprocal movements. For example:

- Sprints
- Kettlebell Swings
- Kettlebell Thrusters aka squat & press
- Burpees
- Squat Thrusts
- Kettlebell Snatches
- Mountain Climbers

How do I know when to progress my TABATA Workouts?

Simple. If you find 8 rounds of 20/10 too easy then it's time to change the exercise or increase the weight.

Choose a full body exercise you feel comfortable with (squats, press ups, lunges, squat thrusts, burpees)

1. Perform a good warm up similar to the exercise you will be performing (so for sprints you would do some less intense running, for swings some lighter swings, for Goblet squats some bodyweight squats)

2. Set your timer for 20 seconds work 10 seconds rest, or have a clock with a second hand in front of you.

3. Go for it, maximum effort.

Don't expect to finish the full 8 rounds or 4 minutes on your first attempt, if you do the exercise is too easy or the weight is too light.

It is very common to reach around 5 rounds before having to stop.

Wait a day or 2 and then try again. Try to add another round each time.

If you are a beginner or haven't exercised in a while then go at your own pace initially, be patient and progress gradually. Rome wasn't built in a day. Lay the foundations and then. Start to build on them, that's progression.

2. PERIPHERAL HEART ACTION TRAINING (PHA)

Peripheral Heart Action training helps to turn your fat burning circuits into "super circuits" by reducing lactic acid build up and improving performance.

The theory behind a PHA workout is simple.

By alternating upper and lower body resistance exercises, interspersed with short bursts of CV activity, your heart rate remains elevated throughout the session; which conditions the heart whilst the resistance exercises tone and strengthen all around the body.

By alternating between upper and lower body exercises, the heart has to work harder to shunt blood from one end of the body to the other, which is enhanced further with bursts of CV training.

Combine that with a warm-up, cool-down and some light stretching and you have a formidable training package, compressed into less than 30 minutes.

Two PHA sessions a week can make significant improvements to your all-round conditioning, whatever your current level of fitness.

Using the PHA method of training you can perform a circuit of exercises and build your fitness and lose fat without having to encounter too much muscular fatigue in one area.

This style of training can work wonders for beginners to advanced level exerciser.

PHA Training – A formidable force

After you've experienced a couple of PHA sessions, you'll realise how effective they are in giving you a challenging but effective total body workout.

They are great for time-starved exercisers because by training smart with fewer workouts, you can still keep your body fit, both inside and out.

A typical PHA workout can be completed in 30 minutes or less, yet exercises your heart and lungs, all the key muscles around the body, includes a warm-up and cool-down for correct exercise protocols, and improved flexibility too. Completed twice a week, that's a formidable package of benefits for less than 2 per cent of your time.