

Beginner Interval Cardio

1. start with a 90 second brisk walk(3/10)
2. speed up to a slow jog for one minute(5/10)
3. drop to a slow walk for 30 seconds(2/10)
4. speed up to a fast jog for 90 seconds(6/10)
5. accelerate to a run for 90 seconds (7/10)
- 6.
7. Slow down to a SLOW walk for 1-4 minutes. Don't start the next lap until you fully recover your breath (1/10)
- 8.
9. resume a brisk walk for 30 seconds (3/10)
10. speed up to a fast jog for 60 seconds (6/10)
11. slow to a slow walk for 45 seconds (1/10)
12. move to a run for 3 to 4 minutes(7/10)
13. drop to a slow walk for 60 seconds (1/10)
14. move to a fast run for 90-120 seconds (8/10)
- 15.
16. Slow down to a SLOW walk for 1-4 minutes. Don't start the next lap until you fully recover your breath (1/10)

Repeat 9 to 16 two or three times depending on fatigue. Always err on the side of taking it light, especially when first getting started with this program.

The numbers in brackets indicate how hard you should be exerting yourself on a scale of 1 -10, 1 being a leisurely walk pace, 10 being as hard as you could possibly sprint. A 5 pace should be enough to get you out of breath, and a 6 pace should get you significantly winded after 3 minutes. An 8 pace means you're really pushing yourself. You shouldn't be able to hold an 8 pace for longer than 3-4 minutes. 10 pace is a full out sprint that you can't hold for more than 45 seconds.

Treat these numbers as general guidelines to help you find the right intensity to work out at. Don't hesitate to drop them down a bit if you feel that this program is too challenging. Under-training is not only safer than over-training, it is actually more effective. Pushing too hard only leads to burn out and a complete failure to get lean and improve health.

On the converse, if this seems *too* easy, increase the intensity a little bit. In any event, you shouldn't finish the workout feeling exhausted. A good workout should leave you more energized than you began. If you finish feeling tired, you've probably pushed a bit too hard.

During the rest breaks, really slow down, move at a very gentle slow pace, and concentrate on breathing deeply, flooding your body with oxygen. Don't start moving quickly again until you've completely recovered your breath. It's tempting to cut these breaks short, thinking that the real "work" gets done while you're moving, but the rest breaks are as much a part of the program as the intense bursts of movement. Your body adapts to exercise and makes the genetic and biochemical changes that underlie fat burning and becoming more fit when you're resting after exercising, and not while you're exercising.

Ideally, try to follow this program on an ellipse (the precor with arms). Simply adjust the resistance of the machine and your pace to vary the intensity. The exact numbers aren't as important as the general rhythm. The fast portions should be reasonably intense, and leave you short of breath. The slow portions should be slow enough for you to recover.

Perform this program three or four times per week. The whole program should last between 20 and 45 minutes depending on how many times you choose to cycle through it. If you have more time, don't ever go longer than 40 minutes – devote additional gym time to resistance training or stretching. Intensity, not duration is the key to optimal results with cardio, and it's the contrast between intense bursts of movement and recovery breaks that will deliver the results you're looking for. As long as you never push too hard!!! On days when you do resistance training, do this program afterwards, but keep it to 20 or 30 minutes.

When you finish this program, try not to move around much for the next 20 minutes. Really give yourself time to sit and relax, and allow your body to recover. This is a good time to stretch.