

HIIT - High Intensity Interval Training – *Is it for Me?*

by **Sandra Carrell Tremblay, D.C.**

In most cases, the answer is Yes. Most people at any age can do a HIIT exercise program. Although HIIT exercise programs are fairly new to the world of exercise science, it is likely that you may have done a HIIT of some kind in the past. Studies show positive changes that appear to exceed that of conventional exercise both in overall athletic fitness and fat burning and oxidation, and that is why they are gaining in popularity.

HIIT stands for High Intensity Interval Training. HIIT works both in the anaerobic and aerobic energy systems which increase the amount of calories burned both during and after exercising, increasing the time it takes the body to recover afterwards. HIIT is designed for people who are focused on improving their overall cardiovascular fitness, endurance, and fat loss, without losing the muscle mass they already have.

HIITs vary in style, but generally begin with a brief warm up, followed by short intervals of exercising at or close to 80% of your maximum heart rate zone for one minute. This is followed by intervals of moderate exercise effort lasting two to three minutes, and repeating the cycle. A typical session lasts for thirty minutes, which includes a warm up and cool down. The Alamo Heights Chiropractic Health Center, uses HIIT training with both athletes and everyday people, teaching a “program of threes” for each one minute of maximum intensity, “...So power up at 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, and 27 minutes, and catch your breath on the minutes in between,” is the advice of exercise specialist Jeff Carrell

The goal is to get individuals to be able to exercise for at least twenty to thirty minutes at the upper end of your maximum (no more than 80%) heart rate zone, and because it is so challenging, it is important to build up slowly over time.

(sidebar) What is your Target Heart Rate Zone?

by the American Heart Association.

Figure your average maximum heart rate by using the number 220 minus your age.

| Age | Target HR Zone 50–85 % | Average Maximum Heart Rate 100 % |
|----------|---------------------------|--|
| 20 years | 100–170 beats per minute | 200 beats per minute |
| 25 years | 98–166 beats per minute | 195 beats per minute |
| 30 years | 95–162 beats per minute | 190 beats per minute |
| 35 years | 93–157 beats per minute | 185 beats per minute |
| 40 years | 90–153 beats per minute | 180 beats per minute |
| 45 years | 88–149 beats per minute | 175 beats per minute |
| 50 years | 85–145 beats per minute | 170 beats per minute |
| 55 years | 83–140 beats per minute | 165 beats per minute |
| 60 years | 80–136 beats per minute | 160 beats per minute |
| 65 years | 78–132 beats per minute | 155 beats per minute |
| 70 years | 75–128 beats per minute | 150 beats per minute |

Fitness and Behavior Expert Dean Anderson, says that elite athletes can usually sustain maximum intensity exercise for three to five minutes before they have to slow down and recover, so don't expect to work longer than that. Full recovery takes about four minutes for everyone, but you can shorten the recovery intervals if your high intensity intervals are also shorter and don't completely exhaust your anaerobic energy system. Your heart rate should go down to 50 -70% of your maximum heart rate during recovery intervals. If not, you must alter your workout for safety. As always, you should have clearance from your doctor before you begin any strenuous form of exercise.

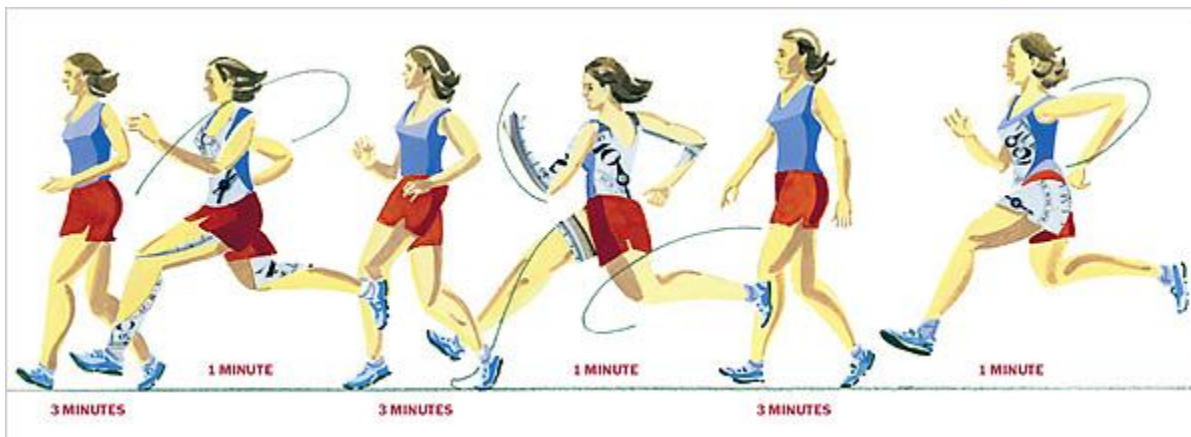
HIITs work because they challenge your cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems to 'keep up' throughout the period of time in which you are exercising. A 2005 study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology found that after just two weeks of interval training, six of the eight college-age men and women doubled their endurance, or the amount of time they could ride a bicycle at moderate intensity before exhaustion.

It didn't matter how fit the subjects were before. Borderline sedentary subjects and the college athletes had similar increases in fitness and fat burning. "Even when interval training was added on top of other exercise they were doing, they still saw a significant improvement," says exercise scientist Jason L. Talanian.

So, how can you start incorporating a HIIT exercise program into your weekly practice? If you exercise by walking out doors, use your heart rate monitor and choose a target, such as an upcoming intersection, or driveway, and increase your walking speed or begin jogging to that point. Check your heart rate and once you have reached your goal, reduce your speed and catch your breath. Choose your next target and repeat. Reaching these short term goals is both physically and mentally rewarding. You can see how this simple method can work at any fitness level. You can become more fit, so get started!

FITNESS

A Healthy Mix of Rest and Motion



Chris Sharp

By PETER JARET
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