

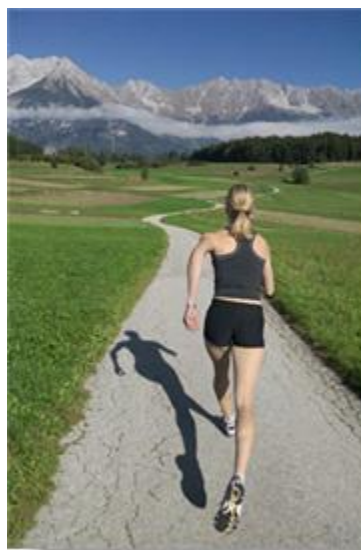


Interval training has been used for decades by high level athletes to condition their bodies for intense competition. However, interval training can be used by anyone of any fitness level. Here you will learn what interval training is, the benefits of interval training and find a few workouts you can try.

## STEP THREE - INTERVAL TRAINING

Here you will learn what interval training is, the benefits of interval training and find a few workouts you can try. Once you understand this, you yourself can create an unlimited number of interval workouts that will be effective and keep your workouts fresh and exciting.

Interval training is simple. It is just what it sounds like. You have an interval of higher intensity exercise (often called the work interval) followed by an interval of recovery or rest of a lower intensity (called the recovery interval). See, pretty simple. Most people who know of interval training associate it with the athlete's implementation of it in the form of HIGH intensity intervals. However, read closely. Above it did not say HIGH it simply said HIGHER intensity. Here is an example of a very simple interval workout.



- Jog/Run for 1 minute
- Walk for 2 minutes
- Repeat 6 times for an 18-minute workout

That's it. You can create all kinds of combinations of work and recovery intervals that can be used in most every activity whether it is running, cycling, jumping rope or any activity you chose.

Typically, the amount of work to rest is displayed as a ratio such as 1:3. For example, for a 1:3 ratio you run for 30 seconds then take 90 seconds for recovery. Another example would be to run 100 meters and walk 300 meters. There is no wrong or right ratio. Simply, the higher the intensity of the work interval the more recovery will be needed. Below is a table that provides work to recovery ratios most appropriate for different conditions.

Your Fitness Level	Work Interval Intensity	Work Ratio	Recovery Ratio
Low	Low	1	1 to 2
	Moderate	1	2 to 3
	High	Not appropriate for low fitness levels	
Moderate	Low	1	1
	Moderate	1	2
	High	1	3
High	Low	1	1/2 to 1
	Moderate	1	1 to 2
	High	1	1 to 3

#### Benefits:

- Increase aerobic capacity - interval training boosts cardiovascular fitness just as well as constant steady state exercise
- Increase muscle endurance - by using higher intensities during the work interval the muscles get more load placed on them causing them to adapt along with the cardiovascular system
- Increase lactate threshold - this simply means you can tolerate that burning sensations in muscles as they fatigue because you can tolerate the lactic acid that builds up in them. Bottom line is you can go longer and faster.
- Increase total calories burned - because the total amount of work done is often higher with interval training the number of calories burned is also higher.
- Increase post exercise calorie consumption - after exercise the increase in calories burned does not immediately drop back to resting levels. It takes several hours to return back to baseline. Interval training increases the time it takes to reach baseline again even more than steady state exercise.
- Increase fat utilization - As caloric consumption increases a greater amount of fat is burned in contributing to those calories.
- Decrease risk of overuse injury - because so much variety can be built in to intervals the same repetitive movements that cause overuse injuries can often be minimized.
- Increase exercise compliance and more enjoyable - because so much variety can be built into an interval workout you less likely to get bored. You are constantly thinking of the changes coming up which keeps it interesting.

- Very time efficient - If you are short on time an interval workout is great because you can often accomplish the same amount of work and caloric consumption in less time.
- Feelings of confidence and accomplishment from doing higher intensity exercise - working harder brings more satisfaction. Spending part of your exercise time in higher intensity exercise feels like you are accomplishing more. The best part is you really are.

### Time Based Intervals

Time is a very easy way to determine your intervals. Simply determine the length of your work interval and then determine the length of your recovery interval with the appropriate work to recovery ratio for you.

### Distance Based Intervals

Distance based intervals are also easy to measure because you simply set the distance and cover it. The recovery interval is just another set distance based on your desired work to recovery ratio. Just keep in mind the faster you cover the distance the shorter the distance has to be and the longer the recovery has to be.

### Heart Rate Based Intervals

Heart rate based intervals use your own heart to determine how long the work interval will be and how long the recovery will be. The best thing about heart rate based intervals is they are completely based on your fitness and how your heart rate responds. Heart rate works especially well for recovery.

### Mixed Intervals

Mixed intervals use any of the 3 methods above together. Here is a table showing some of the best combinations.

Work Interval	Recovery Interval
Time	Heart rate
Distance	Time
Distance	Heart Rate

Below are a few different workouts you can try with the intervals being determined by time, distance or heart rate. Many can be adapted to cycling, jumping rope, or any other activity.

### Square Blocks

Warm up for about 5 minutes with walking or light running. Pick a square block in your neighborhood. Run one length of the block from corner to corner. Then walk the next length of the block. If your work to recovery ratio is 1 to 2 then run 1 side of the block then walk 2 and repeat until you reach the desired workout time. Cool down for 3 to 5 minutes.

### Treadmill Intervals (Can be used either walking or running, cycling or using an elliptical trainer)

Warm up at a brisk walk for 3-5 minutes

Work Interval	Recovery Interval
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Raise to 3% incline for 2 minutes	0% incline for 2 minutes
5% incline for 2 minutes	0% incline for 2 minutes
7% incline for 1 minute	0% incline for 2 minutes
3% incline for 2 minutes	0% incline for 2 minutes
5% incline for 2 minutes	0% incline for 2 minutes
7% incline for 1 minute	0% incline for 2 minutes
10% incline for 1 minute	0% incline for 2 minutes
Cool down 3-5 minutes	25 minute workout without warm-up and cool down

### Run, Side Shuffle, Run Backwards Intervals

Warm up 3-5 minutes. At a park or grassy area step off a square 25 steps per side using markers such as water bottles, small flags or cones to mark each corner. Run forward to the first marker. Side step shuffle to the next marker, run backwards to the third marker then side shuffle to the starting point. Allow your heart rate to recover to just below the bottom of your heart rate zone and repeat.

### Cardio and Strength Intervals in the Park

Warm up 3-5 minutes. At a park or grassy area step off a square 25 steps per side using markers such as water bottles, small flags or cones to mark each corner. Run to marker number one and complete 5-10 pushups. Run to marker number 2 and perform 5-10 lunges. Run to marker number 3 and perform 5-10 crunches. Run to the beginning marker. Either rest 2-3 minutes or until your heart rate drops below your zone. Repeat as many times as desired.

### Running the Lines

Develops cardio fitness and mobility. Warm up 3 -5 minutes. In a park or grassy area step off 10 steps, 20 steps and 30 steps and place a small marker at each. Run to the first marker and touch it. Run back to the start and touch that marker. Run to the second marker and touch it. Run back to the start and touch that marker. Run to the third marker and touch it and run back to the start. Either rest 2-3 minutes or until your heart rate drops below your zone. Repeat as many times as desired.

### Ladder

Warm up 3- 5 minutes

Ladder #1		Ladder #2	
Work	Recovery	Work	Recovery
Run 25 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone	Run 50 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone
Run 50 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone	Run 100 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone
Run 100 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone	Run 200 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone

Run 50 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone	Run 100 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone
Run 25 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone	Run 50 meters	Until heart rate drops below zone
Cool down		Cool Down	

### Playlist Intervals

Warm up 3-5 minutes. Most songs are 3-4 minutes long. Put on your fav playlist and fast walk or run for 1/3 of a song. Then slow down and recover the rest of the song. Repeat for as many songs as needed to get workout time. Cool down.

### HIIT

HIIT stands for High Intensity Interval Training. These can be very effective in developing fitness and decreasing body fat. However, they are very physically demanding as they usually include near maximum exercise (such as running as fast as you can) for the work interval. Only those with an adequate level of base fitness and training should attempt HIIT. There are many web sites with HIIT workouts. Just do a web search to find them.