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8 Best Cardio Workouts for Efficient Weight Loss



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When people think of cardio, usually a boring treadmill, elliptical machine, or other mundane activity comes to mind. But that doesn't have to be the case.

When you're short on time or easily distracted, there are a variety of fat-burning cardio alternatives that will increase your body's metabolism, boost weight loss, and keep you interested.

Here's a list of different types of cardio workouts:

- Steady State (Burns less fat, but isn't as demanding on the body)
- Interval Training (Burns more fat)
- HIIT
- Spinning
- Stairs
- Weight Training (Supersets) short rest periods
- Weight Training (Compound Sets) short rest periods
- Machine Circuit Training

And I'm going to talk about each of them in details:

1. Steady State

Steady state cardio involves working at a low to moderate intensity — around 60 to 70 percent of your maximum heart rate, for a sustained period of time. This type of cardio doesn't burn a huge number of calories, but it does burn a high percentage of fat tissue for fuel, and it isn't too draining.

An example of steady state cardio would be a long outdoor walk at a moderate pace. Interval training, on the other hand, is much more intense.

2. Interval Training

Similar to HIIT but with exercises that are slightly longer in duration, interval training alternates levels of intensity. For example, if you enjoy running, you would run or sprint for 30 seconds, then bring down your heart rate and walk for two minutes.

Pick two intensities per interval, usually one at 85 percent of your maximum heart rate and the other at 60 percent, and alternate between them. I find that 85% for 30 seconds and 60% for one minute, not only burns more calories but increases my energy level as well.

Another example would be jumping rope. Jump rope for two minutes, rest for one minute. Begin again, this time jumping rope for one minute and resting for one minute. On the third and final round, jump rope for 30 seconds and resting for 30 seconds. Repeat five sets of this routine.

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3. HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training)

Have a busy schedule? Fifteen minutes a few times a week is all you need. HIIT is an extremely popular workout because it can be done quickly, burn calories in a short amount of time, and can even be done in your home or during a lunch break at work. And the best part – You don't need any equipment.

With the use of your body weight, HIIT is typically 20 seconds of high intensity exercise followed by 10 seconds of active

rest which means your heart rate remains elevated for the entire 15-minute workout.

Check out this HIIT routine by Fitness Blender: [15 Minute HIIT Workout](#)

4. Spinning

Spinning is a great way to get your heart up and keep it up in a 45-minute spin class. Our thighs and back are our largest muscles so they work the hardest.

To get the most out of spinning, try to stay out of the saddle throughout an entire spin class. That way, you are forced to hold up your body weight which burns more calories and increases intensity.

It's also great for stabilizing and building strong core muscles, versus cycling outdoors, where most of the time you are sitting in the saddle and going for distance (steady-state cardio).

5. Stairs

One of my favorite places to get out of the gym for cardio and trim fat from my thighs and butt is the Santa Monica Stairs, near California's most popular beach. Climbing 170 steps a few times builds the glutes, leans the thighs, strengthens the calves, and builds endurance.

So, if the gym is not your scene and you love the outdoors, climbing stairs is a great alternative. Find a place with multiple steps, do six or seven rounds, and you've easily burned around 600 calories.

6. Supersets

A superset is two exercises that work opposing muscle groups, such as biceps and triceps, quadriceps and hamstrings, or different body parts such as the lower and upper body with little to no recovery between sets.

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The superset may include two to five sets of 8 to 15 repetitions of each exercise or more.^[1]

So, if you love to workout with weight-training but aren't really feeling cardio, supersets with no more than 30-second rest periods between exercises will keep your heart rate up. Not only will you build muscle, you will burn fat!

For example, say you are doing a leg workout, five sets of exercises with high reps and low weight is all it takes to turn your weight-training into a cardio workout.

Here's one of my leg training workouts:

i. Dumbbell Step-Ups on a secure bench or box (4×15, each leg)

ii. Front Squat (4×15)

iii. Wide Stance Dumbbell Goblet (4×15)

iv. Leg Extension (4×15)

v. Leg Curl (4×15)

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Photo Credit: Shape Magazine

vi. Front Squat



Photo Credit: Stack

vii. Wide Stance Dumbbell Goblet Squat

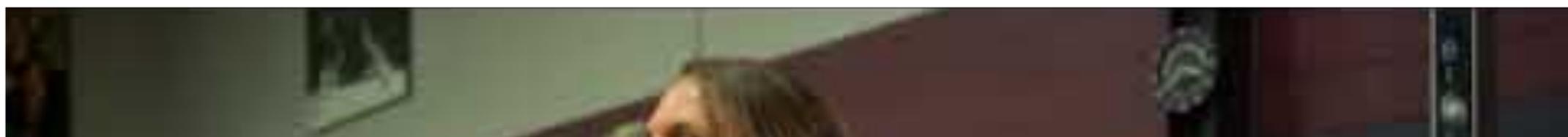
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viii. Leg Extension

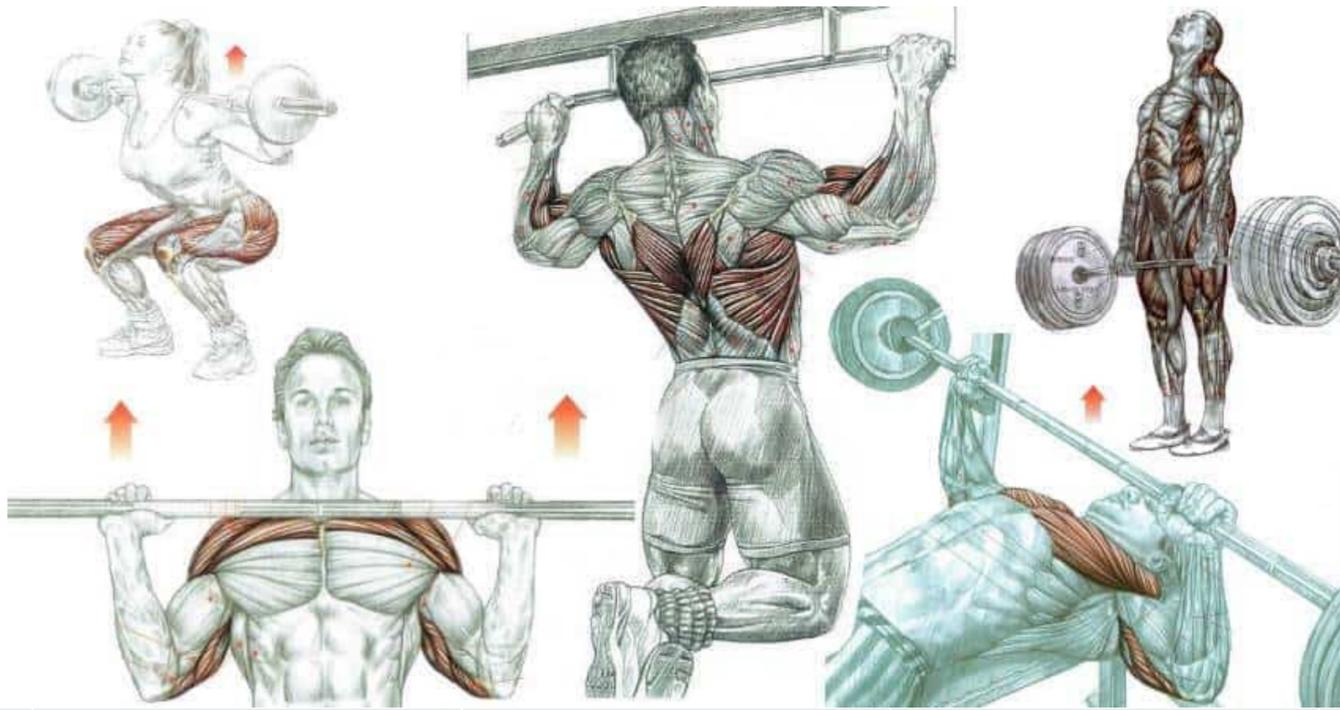


ix. Leg Curl



7. Compound Sets

Compound exercises are exercises that recruit muscles in the entire body, such as pull-ups, squats, bench press, etc. However, a compound set simply means to “compound” the number of different exercises into a series of sets with little or no recovery between, similar to supersets.



This may be accomplished by performing four to five exercises for the same muscle group, opposing muscle groups or total body exercises performed in succession such as full body extensions, followed by squat/cleans and complete the compound set of compound exercises with lunges with biceps curls.

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Compound sets put stress on the body and are great for expending additional calories while strength-training.

8. Machine Weight Training Circuit

Like compound exercises, a machine circuit workout targets the entire body, upper body, lower body, or core. The difference is, with the use of machines instead of free weights, muscle strength is increased by by making your muscles work against weight.^[2] By limiting rest periods between exercises to 30 seconds, your metabolism will go into over-drive!

Machines also give you better control over the exercises, which decreases risk of injury.

Here's a machine circuit training example: [Muscle and Strength Machine Workout](#)

The Bottom Line

The above-mentioned workouts should be completed within 30 minutes, unless you're taking a class which is typically 45 to 60 minutes, giving you time to get on with the rest of your day.

By keeping your rest periods to a minimum between exercises, your heart rate will stay elevated and you will burn more calories, get lean, and have more energy.

Don't be a gym rat, spending unnecessary time doing lengthy workouts that give you minimum results. For efficient weight loss, perform these workouts three times a week and watch the fat melt away while achieving your fitness goals.

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Reference

[1] ^ Mountain Life Fitness: [Super sets, compound sets and giant sets](#)

[2] ^ Better Health Channel: [Resistance training – health benefits](#)



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In Personal Development-speak, we are always talking about goals, outcomes, success, desires and dreams. In other words, all the stuff we want to do, achieve and create in our world.

And while it's important for us to know what we want to achieve (our goal), it's also important for us to understand why we want to achieve it; the reason behind the goal or some would say, our real goal.

Why is goal setting important?

1. Your needs and desire will be fulfilled.

Sometimes when we explore our "why", (why we want to achieve a certain thing) we realize that our "what" (our goal) might not actually deliver us the thing (feeling, emotion, internal state) we're really seeking.

For example, the person who has a goal to lose weight in the belief that weight loss will bring them happiness, security, fulfillment, attention, popularity and the partner of their dreams. In this instance, their "what" is weight-loss and their "why" is happiness (etc.) and a partner.

Six months later, they have lost the weight (achieved their goal) but as is often the case, they're not happier, not more secure, not more confident, not more fulfilled and in keeping with their miserable state, they have failed to attract their dream partner.

After all, who wants to be with someone who's miserable? They achieved their practical goal but still failed to have their needs met.

So they set a goal to lose another ten pounds. And then another. And maybe just ten more. With the destructive and erroneous belief that if they can get thin enough, they'll find their own personal nirvana. And we all know how that story ends.

2. You'll find out what truly motivates you

The important thing in the process of constructing our best life is not necessarily what goals we set (what we think we want) but what motivates us towards those goals (what we really want).

The sooner we begin to explore, identify and understand what motivates us towards certain achievements, acquisitions or outcomes (that is, we begin moving towards greater consciousness and self awareness), the sooner we will make better decisions for our life, set more intelligent (and dare I say, enlightened) goals and experience more fulfilment and less frustration.

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We all know people who have achieved what they set out to, only to end up in the same place or worse (emotionally, psychologically, sociologically) because what they were chasing wasn't really what they were needing.

What we think we want will rarely provide us with what we actually need.

3. Your state of mind will be a lot healthier

We all set specific goals to achieve/acquire certain things (a job, a car, a partner, a better body, a bank balance, a title, a victory) because at some level, most of us believe (consciously or not) that the achievement of those goals will bring us what we really seek; joy, fulfilment, happiness, safety, peace, recognition, love, acceptance, respect, connection.

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Of course, setting practical, material and financial goals is an intelligent thing to do considering the world we live in and how that world works.

But setting goals with an expectation that the achievement of certain things in our external, physical world will automatically create an internal state of peace, contentment, joy and total happiness is an unhealthy and unrealistic mindset to inhabit.

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What you truly want and need

Sometimes we need to look beyond the obvious (superficial) goals to discover and secure what we really want.

Sadly, we live in a collective mindset which teaches that the prettiest and the wealthiest are the most successful.

Some self-help frauds even teach this message. If you're rich or pretty, you're happy. If you're both, you're very happy. Pretty isn't what we really want; it's what we believe pretty will bring us. Same goes with money.

When we cut through the hype, the jargon and the self-help mumbo jumbo, we all have the same basic goals, desires and needs:

Joy, fulfilment, happiness, safety, peace, recognition, love, acceptance, respect, connection.

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Nobody needs a mansion or a sport's car but we all need love.

Nobody needs massive pecs, six percent body-fat, a face lift or bigger breasts but we all need connection, acceptance and understanding.

Nobody needs to be famous but we all need peace, calm, balance and happiness.

The problem is, we live in a culture which teaches that one equals the other. If only we lived in a culture which taught that real success is far more about what's happening in our internal environment, than our external one.

It's a commonly-held belief that we're all very different and we all have different goals — whether [short term](#) or [long term goals](#). But in many ways we're not, and we don't; we all want essentially the same things.

Now all you have to do is see past the fraud and deception and find the right path.

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