

## **Playing The Cardio Card**

*The secret ingredient to lowering hypertension and increasing fat burning*

It's like a bully waiting in the corner. It intimidates you, it haunts you—but more than anything, it bores you. Cardio is something you'd like to ignore yet can't. At least not if you want to keep away from hypertension (140/90, be gone) and get that extra fat off. Still, most people just go through the motions. Jump on the bike for a few minutes here, a little elliptical there, but nothing ever disciplined or specific in regimen. And that, says personal trainer Dave Hawk, is the problem.

Hawks suggest most should do it every other day and low impact cardio on a treadmill station can create just enough resistance to boost metabolism. “You need to break a little bit of a sweat without burning too much into glycogen stores,” he offers. Begin cardio with a ten minute warm-up to get the blood moving and do it in the morning on an empty stomach, Hawk says. Personal trainer Patrick Richardson believes in slowly adding an incline for a better cardio effect. “Start with an eight level on the incline for stairmills while holding on to the bar then see if you can do it without the bars after a few sessions,” he says. “Holding on and leaning back keeps your legs and glutes out of it—Get those muscle involved and it will really affect your metabolism!”

Another alternative to the usual treadmill is simply to speed up weightlifting sessions. By reducing three minute breaks to 30 seconds, it's hard not to feel the burn. “It's about getting in that cardio zone,” Hawk says. “Constantly moving in that gym, switching off from leg exercise to leg exercise, getting that heart rate pumping.” Grant recommends supersetting for an advantage. “Leaving out rest for a couple exercises allows you to do cardio while leaving rest for the lifts you need to truly focus on,” he advises. “If you're trying to get that much stronger on a major lift, you may still need your two minutes in between and shouldn't sacrifice it. Pick the exercises you're doing high reps in anyway and you'll feel it on a four-set superset.”

Finally, the biggest roadblock to finding that cardio balance may be motivation. But that's the time to remember the long-term positive heart effects. From lowering stress to better circulation, sometimes the difference between a future heart attack and health are the miles of cardio you put in between.

### **Cardio Keys**

- Several experts recommend performing cardio in the morning on an empty stomach
- For doing incline cardio, make sure you're not leaning too far back or you'll miss the effect on your glutes and hamstrings
- Don't think the cardio solution is an excuse to get 40 lbs out of shape. You'll find it hard to do cardio, period, when you're carrying around all that bulk.

