

CARDIO

Is **WASTING** Your **TIME**



By Josh Hewett

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Cardio Is Wasting Your Time

Too many people are running themselves into the ground doing hours of cardio in an effort to lose weight and improve their health and fitness. However, more and more research clearly demonstrates that long, slow, steady-state cardiovascular activity is in fact counterproductive to achieving these goals.

Not only is excessive cardiovascular exercise relatively ineffective, but it may actually do more harm than good. I realize that this is a bold statement that flies in the face of the mainstream fitness industry, but this article will explain why this is the truth.

Excessive Cardio Can Harm Your Heart

A recent study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* examined the heart health of a group of men who had been part of a national or Olympic team in distance running or rowing. This study revealed that half of these lifelong endurance athletes showed evidence of heart muscle scarring. Now a new study using laboratory rats (published in the journal *Circulation*) also demonstrates a direct link between prolonged cardiovascular exercise and heart damage (similar to the human endurance athletes).



The research shows that over time strenuous cardiovascular exercise can damage your heart. This may not be a major concern to you unless you're engaged in high-level endurance training, and you certainly shouldn't use it as an excuse to avoid exercising at all. However, there are many other reasons to avoid even low intensity cardiovascular training.

Cardio Can Reduce Your Lean Muscle

Trying to lose weight by performing long periods of cardio may actually also lead to the wasting of muscle tissue (especially in combination with a low calorie diet). This is something we really do NOT want to happen! As I explain in my ebook [Get Lean: Permanent Physique Transformation](#), muscle is the body's fat burning furnace. Lean muscle tissue is responsible for maintaining a healthy metabolism, preventing injuries, improving mobility and performance, as well as helping you develop a toned, athletic-looking physique.

Because excess cardio can metabolize both fat and muscle, it can result in what I call the “skinny-fat” physique. You may lose some weight, but your body will still look and feel soft, flabby, and weak. Also consider the fact that over-doing it with aerobic exercise can increase oxidative stress and lead to elevated cortisol levels, resulting in a depleted immune system and more abdominal fat storage.

Adrenal Fatigue

The adrenals are primarily responsible for releasing hormones in response to stress, including cortisol and adrenalin. Excess cardio can put extra stress on your adrenal glands, which can lead to something known as ‘adrenal fatigue’. This may lead to anxiety, fatigue, depression, insomnia, immunity issues, and inability to concentrate. If your adrenals are compromised this can also make it harder to lose body fat.

Long Slow Cardio Simply Takes Too Long!

In the fast paced society that we live in few people have the time to spend several hours each week doing long, slow, boring cardio workouts. In fact, “*I don’t have the time*” is one of the most popular excuses for not exercising! The truth is that most people are far more likely to participate in an exercise program if the time commitment is not as great, which is fine because unless you are an endurance athlete long duration cardio is totally unnecessary.

What if there was a way to get in great shape in less time, without all the potential negative effects of cardio? Let me explain.

Get Intense To Get Lean

I’m not implying that you should never perform any form of cardiovascular exercise. On the contrary! Going for a walk, a swim, a bike ride, or playing a pick-up game of basketball with your friends are all healthy activities to participate in. If you are a beginner, moderate cardio exercise may be a good way to gradually increase your activity level. Cardiovascular exercise really only becomes a problem when it’s over-done. But there are safer and more effective ways to get in great shape and improve your fitness.

Brief, intense **resistance training** (strength training) workouts are superior to cardio training in a number of ways. Strength training, anaerobic exercise has the benefits of increasing your lean tissue, improving your bone density, regulating your blood sugar, and increasing your metabolism over an extended period of time. The higher the intensity of the strength training session, the longer the metabolism remains elevated, and the more total calories burned.



In my [Get Lean ebook](#) I share the fundamentals of an effective strength training program and outline a complete nutrition and exercise plan for losing body fat.

In addition to strength training, there are certain forms of “cardio-type” training that are very effective. You just need to make your cardio workouts shorter, faster, and more intense! The solution is **High-Intensity Interval Training** (also referred to as HIIT).

HIIT involves brief, intense sessions of cardiovascular exercise, lasting only 15 to 20 minutes. It consists of a series of short, high intensity bursts and longer low intensity intervals. For example, after every 2 or 3 minutes of low intensity jogging you would perform a 30 second fast run, and then back to jogging... alternating these intervals for the entire workout.



Which body is best aesthetically as well as for health and performance?

This type of cardio is FAR more effective for fat loss. For evidence of this, compare the body of an elite sprinter to that of a high-level marathon runner. Sprinters are lean, muscular, and athletic looking, as opposed to the drawn-out, unhealthy appearance of many long-distance runners.

In addition, studies now show that HIIT causes an increase in the release of HGH (Human Growth Hormone) in your body. HGH is a vital hormone that is KEY for physical strength, health and longevity. Plus it burns fat like crazy! With both strength training and interval training, it is important to note that the key is ***intensity***.

I believe it's time to re-evaluate the obsession with cardio in the fitness industry, and consider more effective strategies for fat loss.

For a complete fat loss program, covering strength training, HIIT, nutrition, and mental conditioning, check out [**Get Lean: Permanent Physique Transformation**](#).

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About the Author:



Josh Hewett, BA Kinesiology, is a certified trainer, public speaker, and the author of “[**Get Lean**](#)”. He is the owner of www.Top-Form-Fitness.com and the founder of Team Barbarian Strength Athletics (OPA affiliated). His articles have been featured on several popular websites, including StraightToTheBar.com, EliteFTS.com, QFAC.com, DieselCrew.com, and many others. Josh has been working in the fitness and physical conditioning industry for over 20 years, and has helped hundreds of people reach their fitness and performance goals using his proven training system.

Take advantage of his free **comprehensive Fat Loss and Muscle Building** bonuses by signing up at www.StrongerAndLeaner.com.