

High-intensity interval training can help burn more fat

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

"If that stubborn body fat isn't going away, consider adding High-Intensity-Interval-Training or HIIT to your exercise routine," says Professor Zeljko Pedisic of Victoria University, Melbourne.

HIIT increases fat burning more than [aerobic exercise](#), finds a study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

How was the study conducted?

Authors of the study pooled results from 18 controlled intervention trials on the effects of HIIT on the rate of fat burning during exercise.

The intervention trials included a total of 511 adult participants who were engaged in supervised HIIT, moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, or a non-exercising control group.

The duration of exercise interventions ranged from 2 to 14 weeks. In almost all studies, participants engaged in three HIIT sessions per week.

What are the key findings?

A few sessions of HIIT per week will turn your body into a fat burning "machine." HIIT will make you start burning more fat not just during the HIIT sessions, but also during other types of physical activity, such as brisk walking, swimming, and playing sports.

Fat metabolism will improve after only four weeks of HIIT, and it will continue to improve with time.

After 12 weeks of HIIT, each minute of physical activity is expected to burn an additional 0.13 grams of fat. For someone who engages in 150 minutes of physical activity per week, this could lead to approximately 10 kg of additional fat burned in a decade.

Overweight individuals may expect greater increases in fat burning, compared with "normal"-weight individuals.

While individuals could also improve [fat metabolism](#) by engaging in aerobic [exercise](#) (e.g. jogging), this would require a much higher time

commitment, and the improvements would be smaller.

Why is this important?

These findings may help more than two billion overweight people(external link) in the world to improve their fat metabolism and reduce weight.

They may also help billions of others to prevent unwanted weight gain over time.

"According to the recent Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends(external link), HIIT is among the most popular types of workouts. If you are not already doing it, maybe you should give it a go," concludes Professor Pedisic.

More information: Muhammed M Atakan et al, Effects of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and sprint interval training (SIT) on fat oxidation during exercise: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1136/bjsports-2021-105181](https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2021-105181)

Provided by Victoria University, Melbourne

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