

Hit fitness goals with half the work-out time

7 December 2015, by Rob Payne, Sciencenetwork Wa



80% of participants stuck with the HIIT program. Credit: Phil Roeder

Six one-minute sprints up Jacob's Ladder in King's Park can be just as beneficial as 45 minutes of regular jogging, research suggests.

High-intensity [training](#) has the same cardiovascular and metabolic benefits as traditional moderate-intensity training, according to a UK-led study involving Curtin University.

These include the loss of midsection fat, an improvement in psychological wellbeing and overall sensitivity to insulin.

Given that a high-intensity session takes half the time of traditional training, researchers hope more people will use their program to maintain exercise regimes.

Does this mean I will keep my New Years Resolution next year?

"Approximately 50 per cent of adults drop out of exercise programs within the first six months," Curtin University Associate Professor Cecilie Thogersen-Ntoumani says.

"The majority of the worldwide population fail to reach the recommended 150 minutes or more per week of moderate intensity exercise and a 'lack of time' is the most highly cited reason."

High-intensity training was shown to be an answer, as around 80 per cent of participants stuck with the program, compared to approximately 60 per cent of those doing traditional exercise.

Even more, self-reported levels of activity increased for the high-intensity group, and were sustained at the three-month follow-up.

The study saw 90 healthy, inactive individuals aged 18-60 years randomly divided into traditional and high-intensity groups for 10 weeks.

How did they do it?

High-intensity groups did one of the following training regimes, three times a week:

- high-intensity sprints of 15 seconds with 45 seconds active recovery for 18 minutes;
- or 60-second sprints with two minutes active recovery for 25 minutes.

Personal monitors ensured that participants stayed at 90 per cent of their age-specific heart-rate limit throughout.

Meanwhile, the traditional groups did moderate-intensity cycling for 30 minutes, progressing to 45 minutes by week-10, five times per week.

These participants stayed at 70 per cent of their age-specific heart-rate limit.

Both traditional and high-intensity groups showed similar improvements, including a 9 per cent improvement in how much oxygen the body is capable of utilising, which is associated with a reduction in all-cause mortality risk.

Both groups also had a comparable reduction in

non-soluble fats in the blood stream, which are associated with cardiovascular disease.

Researchers say their exercise program can be delivered to a large number of people of varying ages and physical fitness levels in any gym setting, to deliver real fitness results in a shorter time.

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