

Fitness

Land

Home of H.I.T Express® Fitness Studio
212 Grange Road, Fairfield, VIC 3070

(03) 9497 1230

The origins of HIT Express dates back to the 1970s. The creator of this concept, Arthur Jones, also invented the Nautilus Exercise Machines back then. Its demise was strongly associated with Arthur Jones refusal to sell himself into the world of commercial hype and bombastic marketing. FitnessLand follows that same tradition and pays homage to Arthur Jones integrity. H.I.T Express means High Intensity Training. H.I.T Express is based on a common sense approach to health, well-being and improving your body. Anyone of any age and fitness level can realise the benefits of H.I.T Express. The following essays further explain the concepts involved in this approach.

Do you have 90 minutes a week?

If your answer to this question is "Yes" - then you have sufficient time to reach your maximum potential for strength, fitness, and physique.

Adapted from Agelessathletes.com

Believe me, I'm not making this up. Everything we know about exercise science supports this statement. There's no catch! I've written a lot about training routines that take 90 minutes a week. But, I'm not sure the message has been as clear as it should be. Here's what we know.

Multiple sets of an exercise are really no better than doing one good set. There are about 55 scientific studies on this topic and only 3 show any slight benefit of multiple sets. 53 show the results are the same. You get just as much improvement doing one set per movement as two, three or for that matter any number of sets. If you're doing multiple sets, stop. You'll save yourself a great deal of time and toil AND still make progress toward your training goals. For larger and more complex muscle groups such as thighs, upper-back, chest, and shoulders, a good exercise prescription is one set each of a compound movement and an isolation movement. For example, for thighs you can do a squat or leg press and a leg extension. For smaller or simpler muscle groups such as traps, biceps, or calves, you can do one movement. If you REALLY think you must do more, for a couple of muscle groups you can do one set each of three different movements. So, your maximum number of sets per muscle group is three and your minimum is one.

The ideal training frequency for each muscle group is twice per week. But, there are important qualifications. Most weight training routines have a lot of overlapping exercises so that muscle groups receive more exercise than what they are 'supposed to get' from movements directed specifically toward them. For example, when you target your shoulders and chest your triceps get worked 'accidentally'. So, with overlap you are providing a good deal of stimulation on multiple occasions. As a result, you may not be able to recover well enough to do justice to training different muscle groups twice per week. In that case, train muscle groups once per week. It's better to do fewer great workouts than to struggle through more frequent mediocre workouts. The mediocre workouts don't do anything but take recovery time away from training. Many people will find that training muscle groups once per week is the ticket. Hard to believe, but it's true. You can use one to three sets per week per muscle group and improve. You see everything really revolves around being able to progress a little bit at a time while maintaining great exercise form with high intensity. Nothing else seems to matter. This is the essence of progressive resistance training.

Now keep in mind that everyone responds to training differently. Virtually all of these differences are the result of genetic factors. Some people are genetically programmed to develop strength + muscles. Some people have very good leverage for some movements. And, some people are able to recruit a high percentage of muscle fibres and are often far fitter/stronger than they look. Knowing how much genetics influence your results is liberating. You can't change your genetics, so just go out and see what you can do. There's no magical routine. Just training longer or more frequently won't make any difference either. So, do the simplest science-based routine. You may think that you are "genetically-limited", but you may surprise yourself. I'm frequently asked this question; "Don't you need different routines to maximize strength, or lean muscle mass, or get very cut and defined?" The answer is "no". If you get stronger, you'll get bigger and as you get bigger muscles (& thus better Shape), you'll be able to use more resistance. When you can use more resistance for 5, 10, 15, or 20 repetitions, the amount of resistance you can use for one repetition will proportionally increase. Likewise, if you use specific movements that are the usual barometer of strength such as the deadlift, squat, or bench press or their machine equivalents, you'll get as strong as you're going to be in these traditional movements. Can you get really defined using the same training routine? Of course you can. Being defined means having a low percent body fat and has virtually everything to do with the number of calories you consume in a decent healthy diet and your genetics. Getting defined has almost nothing to do with a specific training routine! Getting defined doesn't involve eating lots of supplements either. Nothing is required except a healthy diet. If you need to gain weight, you slightly increase calories. If you want to lose body fat, you slightly decrease calories. For an example

of eating Real Food instead of using supplements, ask our instructors for Material to study. The workout routines given in & FitnessLand are all good examples of workouts that take minimum time, producing optimal results. If you count up the time it takes to do the typical weight training routine used in FitnessLand, you see that it takes about 70 minutes per week. So, we still have 20 minutes left. That's our time for cardiovascular training. The notion, especially for cardiovascular training, is that you need to be spending a lot of time to get fit. It's just not true. Gaining and maintaining fitness is similar in many ways to gaining and maintaining strength. It's training intensely and following a prescription that counts. How long you train isn't the key. Frequency of training is important for cardiovascular training but an ideal frequency is only twice per week. You won't gain much more by training three times per week. The Graded Exercise Protocol or "GXP" takes 10 minutes to do and really fits the bill. It's very prescriptive but very simple to do on almost any cardiovascular training piece/machines.

That's it. That's the whole deal. If you've got 90 minutes per week, you can maximize your strength, fitness, and physique. For those of you, who still have questions or don't believe this approach can work, here are some commonly asked questions.

Q: This kind of routine doesn't expend many calories. Isn't that a problem?

A: The best strategy for controlling your weight and body fat is to watch what you eat, not to use exercise to burn calories. But, as many of us get older and become more sedentary, there is something to be said for introducing more physical activity to our daily lives. Notice I said "physical activity"; not exercise or training. Physical activity can mean almost any recreational and leisure activity including walking, gardening, playing with the kids and some sports. It certainly can be fun and will enhance your health. The idea is to keep it part of your life style and not make it into more training. Adding physical activity will burn calories.

Q: I can recover pretty well so that training muscle groups once per week is just too little. But, I can't recover well enough to train muscle groups twice week. What's the solution?

A: You can set up almost any kind of whole body routine or split routine so that you actually train muscle groups three times in two weeks. That can be absolutely ideal.

Q: When I'm very busy, I stick to training muscle groups once per week. When I'm not that busy and can rest more, I'll often train muscle groups three times in two weeks. If I'm only doing one to three movements per muscle group, how can I get any variety?

A: Variety is often overrated. Exercise movements get very interesting when you actually improve on them. It's a sure antidote for boredom. But, you can introduce enough variety into your routine by simply varying some key movements each workout. For example, one week do the squat for one of your two thigh movements and the next week do the leg press, returning the following week to the squat. You can also use the same exercise movements but change their order in a routine.

Recommendations by FitnessLand

Yes, we subscribe to the above philosophy. However, the individual needs of trainees need to be addressed when considering the number of minutes devoted to fitness training. 90 minutes/45 minutes twice-a-week, may or may not be the ideal for you. It may most likely be the ideal, but there are other factors involved. For example, if you can only weight train once a week, it would have to be less than 90 minutes a week. Or if you are, say, 40% bodyfat percentage, adding low intensity exercise (e.g., brisk walking) for an extra 60 minutes per day 5-7 days a week may be a good idea, if you have the time and the energy.

The bottom line is that we believe you should use this "90 minute thing" as a base. Modify it, improve it, and apply it!

Women and Muscles



It is easy to overlook how precious muscles are. Women, in particular, often fail to appreciate the vital importance muscle plays in having an attractive physique. The fact is that diet-induced muscle loss is a more serious problem for women because they have less muscle to begin with, tend to lose it more readily, and are hormonally limited in their ability to build muscle.

Most women's view of muscle is tainted by the unfounded fear of "getting big" or looking unfeminine. Don't worry, as long as you do not take steroids or other anabolic drugs, your female hormonal chemistry will not permit you to look anything like the "female" bodybuilders you may have seen on TV or in magazines. To the contrary, a bit of added muscle, when coupled with fat loss, will produce a smaller look.

The reason for this is that muscle is denser and therefore takes-up less space on your body than does fat. What this means is that shedding body fat and building a little bit of muscle (which is all that you, as a female, are capable of building anyway) will make you leaner, smaller, firmer, healthier, and shapelier. Depending on how much fat you have to begin with, improving your body composition may not be reflected by much of a change in weight due to the fact that muscle weighs more than fat – but who cares? As long as you are becoming healthier and feeling and looking better, it should not matter to you what the scale says.

With the above in mind, you should begin to deprogram the weight loss mentality that has been relentlessly instilled in you by society, and which guarantees failure. Commit yourself to your new strategy, which is to shed excess body fat and to preserve – or even better, to build a bit of muscle – and thereby become leaner, smaller, firmer, healthier, and shapelier.

A Feminine Perspective on High Intensity Training

by Sarah J. Williams



Why are women so unwilling to be kind to themselves? As a high intensity personal trainer, I am confronted with the guilt and the doubts of many women who simply feel badly when they haven't spent at least five hours in the gym each week. Why? My name is Sarah Williams and I am a recovering aerobics instructor. I say recovering, because I too suffer the pangs of guilt every time a pound or two creeps onto my bathroom scale. Never mind the fact that I got to spend a week of vacation with my husband. Never mind that we enjoyed ourselves. I have an ideal weight by God, and I should never allow myself to exceed it. Sound familiar? The acculturation of women in our society has lead many of us to horribly twisted self perceptions. We believe, as women, that we must earn pleasure. That you can't enjoy something unless you have really paid for it. For example, those aerobics classes with the cute titles right before the holidays, "Move Your Feet Before You Eat." We can't just look forward to an afternoon with loved ones and a great meal. No, we have to pay first. This may sound like an exaggeration, but for myself, I have the shin splints, blown out knees, plantar fasciitis, and low back pain to show for my rise into womanhood. Like many women, I discovered Super Slow, high intensity weight training, in August's edition of Vogue magazine. After 12 years of teaching aerobics an average of five times a week, I was still 15 pounds overweight. Before reading the article, I had tried everything to lose the 15 pounds. I starved, I started running 5K's, I was using the Stair Master, all in addition to aerobics. Soon my knees and feet ached with every step. My resting heart rate was 55bpm, I could outrun a lot of the men I knew, but still had those menacing 15 pounds. I remember looking out into my aerobics classes at my audience of members and seeing younger thinner people looking at me as if to say, "She's the instructor?" And even though I delivered a mean step class, and everybody always cheered, I knew something had to be missing. Reading that article was like an epiphany. For the first time, it all made sense. In aerobics certification, some cursory notice of weight lifting is given, but only as a secondary part of a workout. I had never heard or read of the weight lifting being the workout.

Here lies the scam of the aerobics industry. Have you ever seen an aerobics dance show on television? What do you see? Young, active, rhythmically adept people already fit, striving to become more fit, and having a blast doing it. But, for whom is the aerobics class designed? Who's the person most likely to be instructed by her doctor to increase her aerobic activity level? The young vivacious female in the stretch pants? Nope. The truth is, for the most part, our female role models for fitness are unreal. They are usually young women, who are not yet experiencing the physical and metabolic changes brought on by time. They are predisposed for rhythmic movement and are kinaesthetically gifted. They make it all look so easy. The criminal part is, we have been brainwashed to believe that anyone can look and perform like they do. I believed it. I started teaching aerobics during it's Golden Age, 1985. I was seventeen. When I look back on it now, I can't believe I'm not more injured. All the repeated impact, five to seven times a week. Ever wonder what happens to all those cheeky instructors on T.V.? They get older. At twenty I was in college and still teaching aerobics, but I had begun to gain weight. Little by little, I steadily gained weight over the course of the next 10 years. My metabolism had changed. It was supposed to. I, of course, thought of myself as a complete failure. After reading the Vogue article, I began a search for Super Slow facilities in my area and was surprised to find two. I began training with my own trainer and after 6 weeks of high intensity training I finally lost those 15 pounds. I quit teaching aerobics after I earned my Super Slow certification. I also read Dr. Barry Sears' book The Zone Diet, which I follow honestly about 85% of the time. I have had no trouble keeping the weight I lost off, and have continued to progress in my own training. But this article isn't about weight loss per se. It's about the crooked path and diffused focus we all have of fitness. I know now what being fit is really about. It's about living a longer life, free of debilitating illness. A life where I can ride bicycles, go hiking, bend down to pick up my dog, and not have to worry about how I'll feel the next day. High intensity training made this possible for me. I work out twice a week for twenty minutes. I have a group of 30 clients, both men and women, who do the same. Where I train is still a traditional gym-like setting, many people look on what my clients and I do as controversial. However, all of my clients have shown marked improvement in strength and body composition in the five months that I have been training them. You can't dispute visible results. I gain an average of three new clients every week. They are usually women who, like me, have been so emotionally accosted by the fitness industry that they're ready to explore new avenues. The wonder of high intensity training is as real for them as it ever was for me. It is my hope that this message reaches other women who are discovering the benefits and challenges of high intensity training. The weight training arena has so long been occupied by men, I feel that all the women who are now entering this field need representation and an opportunity to share their concerns with other women. At the risk of sounding "preachy" I believe we are the owners of our destinies. Women as a whole simply must refuse the blanket acceptance of the young, thin, "90210" fitness image. Not because there's something wrong about being young or thin, but because a merely cosmetic focus belittles the value of real fitness. Worse, these shallow mind sets degrade and gradually convince women that their personal worth rests entirely in their cosmetic appearance. As women we are the supporters and care givers in our families. Stereotypes aside, it's

simply a fact, and we often do it alone. Imagine how much more valuable the five hours spent in the aerobics room would be, if it were spent with our spouses and our children.

High intensity training is the way of the future, not because it's new, but because it makes sense. It uses sane methods, to achieve real results, in a timely manner. However, unlike other aspects of the fitness industry, high intensity training does not offer any miracle cures. There are no pills to take, or special fat melting attire to wear. High intensity training is about hard work. It's about enduring short periods of intense difficulty marked by longer periods of rest. Greg Anderson, a Super Slow trainer, once told me; "People will spend a-million dollars on a bonafide lie but they wont spend five bucks on the truth." This concerns me about high intensity training, especially here in California where the aerobics industry has such a powerful influence. I worry that the mere simplicity of what high intensity training offers isn't a good enough gimmick. I do know my clients see results, and so does everyone else. My hope is that results will sell themselves. However, the clients who are most grateful for the results they see, are women. I believe as women, we can exert significant leverage in an effort to promote high intensity training. I believe high intensity training will change the face of the fitness industry.

Ultimately, my wish for everyone would be to use high intensity training to establish life long fitness goals that will positively impact health and visions of the future.

Women and Weight Training: Countering Myths and Misperceptions

adapted for Victoria Road Fitness (VRF).

Because most women have no interest in becoming big and muscular, women believe their training programs should be quite different from men's programs.

From this key concern -- becoming too big -- a number of myths and misperceptions have evolved about women's weight training. Such myths and misperceptions have kept many women from weight training or training with any degree of effectiveness. Most women are, unfortunately, not doing the one activity -- weight training -- that can truly shape their bodies in a highly attractive way, greatly improve their health now and in the future, and markedly improve strength.

This article counters myths and misperceptions about women and weight training and makes the case that in most instances the training programs for women and men will be virtually identical. Moreover, the principles of training governing these programs are the same. There are not separate training principles for women and men because training principles are universal.

Let's first examine a number of these myths and misperceptions and then provide principles and prescriptions for successful training applicable to both men and women.

Myths: The chief concern of women is that by weight training they will become big, muscular, and highly defined. This is a myth and misperception because few individuals of either sex have the genetic endowment to develop a large, defined musculature. Women and men possessing these characteristics seem to be more the norm today only because bodybuilding for women and men has become more popular and, hence, visible in print and electronic media. (Also, consider the pervasiveness of steroid use). A safe bet is only several women out of 10,000 could ever develop the appearance of a top bodybuilder. Unless a woman reading this article is one of those several out of 10,000, becoming too big and muscular is not a concern of the other 9,996 women!

Taking a quite different tack, many women believe they are incapable of gaining much strength and thus restrict themselves to using light weights, high repetitions, and high sets. There also may be a fear of injury if heavier weights are used.

Many women cannot lift as much weight or move as much resistance as men simply because women tend to have less lean body mass than men and few women have trained seriously for any length of time.

Actually, on a basis of lean body mass, many women are capable of proportionally becoming as strong as many men. Thus, Jane may have 100 lbs of lean body mass at a total body weight of 125 lbs and do squats with 150 lbs. John may have 170 lbs of lean body mass at a total body weight of 200 lbs and do squats with 255 lbs. The proportion of weight used in the squat to lean body mass (1.5 to 1.00) is the same. Both Jane and John will profit from the same program based on the same principles, and neither will risk injury if they train correctly. In this example, notice that Jane at 125 lbs is still not a large person. She is very unlikely to develop large legs even by being able to squat 10 to times with 100 lbs because the genetic traits necessary for developing large muscle are exceedingly rare. Based both on the fear of getting too big -- which is an unreasoned fear -- and the quite contrary belief that women can't get very strong, many women adopt a training program revolving around the notion of "toning" plus a large amount of aerobic training.

The purpose of this regime is presumably to remain "small", keep weight under control, and maintain a "fit and feminine appearance". Thus, another myth and misperception is that toning and large amounts of aerobics are the smart training choices for women. Let's see why this is, indeed, a misperception.

Toning is a term that has no scientific basis. It is not a term that appears in exercise physiology books. It's a made-up term. But what does toning mean in popular parlance? The term implies using light weights or other resistance presumably to derive some small muscular effect -- for strength and appearance. With toning, the idea seems to be not to put forth much effort (intensity) but to do a great deal of work (volume) -- many sets, many repetitions.

It's been known for at least 50 years that this is an ineffective training method. Here's why.

According to the well-established size principle, muscle fibres are recruited -- this means the order they "fire" or work - based on the intensity of effort. Smaller slow-twitch fibres will be recruited for lower-intensity efforts, while more and other fast-twitch fibres are only recruited with higher-intensity efforts. Simply put, lower-intensity toning does not effectively work the muscles. But what about doing many repetitions and many sets? Such training practices are not only ineffective, they are a total waste of time. They wear you out and give you nothing in return. In fact, it has been reported many times on research comparing the use of single sets for each exercise and multiple sets. There is virtually no evidence to support the common practice of doing multiple sets for each exercise. That is, there is no additional benefit of doing two or three sets let alone the many sets of one exercise that many women do. It is basically a waste of time and effort and can actually reduce the quality of the workout. That's because doing a great deal of work is exhausting, time consuming, and undermines the ability to recover and adapt from a workout. Rather what is effective is using one high intensity set for each exercise.

Intensity: As soon as the word "intensity" is introduced, most women become intimidated and turned off because they equate the term with using a great deal of weight or other resistance, something they fear or see on an absolute basis they can't do as well as most men. Intensity, however, does not signify any specific weight or resistance or, for that matter, a specific number of repetitions. The weight or resistance used is relative to the strength of each individual, and the specific number of repetitions used is somewhat arbitrary.

Intensity does mean the degree of effort you are putting forth at a given time. The surest way to effective weight training for women or men is training with high intensity in a progressive manner. Let's see exactly what this means by focusing on only one specific muscle, the biceps. The most basic exercise movement for the biceps is the curl, which can be done with a barbell, dumbbell, or machine. In our example, you can properly curl 25 lbs for 5 slower repetitions. This means you curl the weight up ("concentric" part of the movement) in about 3-4 seconds with no momentum, pause for a second, and slowly lower ("eccentric" part) the bar in 3 or 4 seconds for each repetition. Thus, each repetition will take between 6-8 seconds and the total time for the set is about 30 to 40 seconds. You can no longer move the bar in proper form after the fifth repetition; you "fail" at that repetition. This is a very high-intensity set because at the fifth repetition you are working with maximum effort. It is the maximum effort and then just slightly exceeding yourself next time that provides your muscles -- in this case your biceps -- with the correct training stimulus.

What if you just stopped at four repetitions? Since you are capable of five good repetitions, the four-repetition set does not provide the appropriate stimulus. What about doing what many women do in their routines, perform five sets with 15 lbs for 10 repetitions each? Again, you have not provided the correct stimulus because these sets are merely sub maximal duplications of themselves.

With high-intensity, progressive training, your task in the future is to try to do another repetition in good form with 25 lbs, i.e., 25 x 6. You would have progressed on repetitions. Four to six slower repetitions in a movement is a good goal. Once you have reached your repetition goal, for the next workout, you would slightly increase the weight, e.g., to 27 lbs. Chances are you will only be able to do four repetitions with this added weight, so you begin the progression toward six repetitions which will take an additional set of workouts. The process is called the double progression system because you attempt to increase either repetitions or weight in each successive workout. It's a basic universal principle of weight training that applies to everyone, women and men. Now here's a point women (and men) should really love. Progressive high-intensity training is so effective you cannot do many high-intensity sets (volume), and you cannot train very often (frequency). High-intensity -- the effective way to train -- is incompatible with high volume (doing a lot of sets) and high frequency. In training, more is not better; it's usually worse. Train purposefully and hard and then rest and recover. You may at first be incredulous about the specific example shown here; but once you understand and apply the principles of high-intensity training, you will be incredulous no longer.

Example: The toning program for biceps (and this is just one simple muscle) is one you may find in many training articles and books for women. The beginner and advanced programs take a good deal of time, and it's got to be boring repeating the same exercise over and over. The high-intensity biceps program takes only a few minutes per week and less for the advanced training. The reason for the further reduction in sets (volume) and workouts (frequency) is that more advanced trainers -- women and men -- can bring greater focus and intensity to their exercise so they need less work (volume) and more time for recovery (less frequent training).

Still incredulous? Keep this main idea in mind. The high-volume toning approach does not properly train muscles. It's a waste of time and energy. The very brief, high-intensity approach provides the necessary stimulus for strength and muscle increases. Once the stimulus has been provided by your efforts, no more exercise is required. Additional exercise is unnecessary. It's not a question of how much exercise you can possibly tolerate but exactly what is the correct dose of exercise that is required to make improvements in strength and muscle mass. Body Composition: Women who slowly and modestly gain more muscle will change their body composition. Such women will have more lean body mass and less fat. If you're one of these women, you'll look a lot better. Now here's another key point, and it's closely related to the fear of getting too big. Muscle weighs more than fat. Training will strengthen and reshape a woman's body, and she may weigh slightly more than before she started training. (Provided nutritional needs are optimised). However, the scale weight is not nearly as significant as a woman's body composition. Indeed, an untrained or improperly trained woman weighing 130 lbs may be 30% body fat, almost 40 lbs of fat. The same properly trained woman may weigh 132 lbs but with only 20% body fat, and she'll look terrific!

Women who are effectively training should not simply depend on the scale. If you need to have your progress quantified, aside from the increase in strength you'll be showing, consider having body fat measurements done every month or so. (We provided this in VRF). That's where you'll notice some meaningful difference. Aerobic Training: Now, what about aerobic training? Shouldn't women who want to lose weight and body fat do many hours per week of lower- or moderate-intensity aerobic training? This is another myth and misperception that needs to be countered. Here are the reasons. The rate of "burning" calories in lower-intensity aerobics is, indeed, low. Even if your goal was simply to expend calories, this isn't a great way to do it. For example, to expend several hundred calories in lower-intensity aerobics, you may have to do a 90-minute workout. Is that how you want to spend your time?

Such lower-intensity aerobic training does virtually nothing for your cardiovascular fitness. Intensity in cardiovascular workouts just as in weight training is the key. Intensity in cardiovascular training is defined in terms of the percent maximum oxygen consumption or for convenience sake the percent of your maximal heart rate. Your maximum heart rate is approximated by the formula of 220 minus your age. So a conditioned 40-year-old woman could have a maximum heart rate of 180 beats per minutes, perhaps a bit higher if she was in really good condition. Cardiovascular workouts at 50-60% of your maximum heart rate just do not do much for cardiovascular fitness, and the rate of caloric expenditure is low. There's no reason why such aerobic training should be at the "heart" of any woman's or man's program. Such lower to moderate activity could be, however, a peripheral,

optional part of the program, particularly if outside of exercise time life is pretty sedentary. It's only recently that work and day to day living has required so little activity so doing some activity each day can have some real health and mental health benefits. This will be discussed later. Safely and progressively training at 75-85% and occasionally 90% of your maximum heart rate can do a great deal to increase a woman's fitness, and the rate of caloric expenditure is high. Moreover, it appears interval-type higher-intensity training, that you can do on any machine or is the basis of many step and other classes, is an excellent way to become fitter. Another way to do interval training is simply to intersperse walking up steps or hills or simply walking faster for 30 seconds to two minutes during more moderate steady state walking. There's also some evidence that performing higher-intensity aerobic interval training results in more fat "burning" (oxidation) after the training session than the more usual steady state training. This is because higher intensity weight training or interval training creates a real disruption to the metabolism. It takes time after training, hours, to return to a more balanced state. The entire process requires more calories. So you get great fitness, a high rate of caloric expenditure, and "fat burning" in one workout.

Previous VRF publications have described in great detail the rationale for a special Graded Exercise Protocol (GXP). Here's how to do the GXP. We can conservatively use your age predicted maximum heart rate for this protocol. Do a graded warm-up of several to five minutes that takes you to 80% of your age predicted maximum heart rate at the end of the warm-up. Then, without stopping, do a 3-minute steady state work period keeping your heart rate at about 85% of your age predicted maximum heart rate. Finish the GXP with a 3-minute cool down. Obviously, as you become fitter, you need to adjust the pace of the warm-up and 3-minute piece to keep your heart rate in the right zone.

The entire GXP takes 10 minutes and is done twice per week.

Here again are some points women and men will love. If you build more muscle mass, even modestly so, you will modestly but meaningfully increase your resting metabolic rate. This means you expend more calories all the time. So, coupling effective weight training with interval training or the GXP is a sure-fire way to change body composition. Keep this in mind. There is no requirement of every-day aerobics.

Moreover, just as with weight training, volume isn't important. There's very little evidence that doing longer aerobic training in any way increases cardiovascular fitness. It's intensity that counts. Forget once again the myth and misperception that more is better. Performing countless hours of lower-intensity aerobics will not melt away fat or "reshape" a woman's body. What it will do is waste a good deal of time and lead to terminal boredom.

Routines: With an eye toward favourably changing body composition, what are ideal training routines for women? Here are sample routines with each workout taking no more than 35-45 minutes. Routines use only one set per exercise. Unlike what you see many women and men doing, there is little need for elaborate warm-ups. You can do some general warm-up for several minutes to elevate your heart rate. You can then also do one or two warm-up sets with 6-10 repetitions for each exercise in a workout. You are doing slow, controlled repetitions with great form. You don't have to run from one movement to the next. So-called circuit training is not a great way to increase aerobic fitness and it is not a way to increase strength. About one minute between exercise movements works well.

Please Note:

While the recommendations in VRF are similar to the above writing, some variations are inevitable due to personal goals in training. As always, we urge that you exercise your own sense of logic and judgement, based on safety and health.