



High-Intensity Interval Training: Push the Limits While Maximizing Time

How many of your clients struggle to find the time to work out? Depending on their skill level, high-intensity interval training may be the solution to their hectic schedules.

Every Wednesday and Saturday morning, 100 people pack the gym (or parking lot) at Life Time Fitness in Minnesota and we sweat it out in a class I teach called HIIT – High Intensity Interval Training. It’s a form of exercise that is garnering lots of attention in the media and being sold as improving your cardiovascular fitness level and burning more calories while spending less time in the gym. Sounds good right? Well the key words to focus on are “high intensity”... so don’t be fooled by thinking that shorter workouts mean easier

The key to HIIT training that makes it different than basic intervals is that the high intensity intervals involve maximum effort not just a higher heart rate. So to differentiate from “plain old” intervals you have to push yourself to the max during the work portion followed by a period of recovery. This type of athletic challenge has been proven to enhance cardiovascular fitness and athletic capacity, increase lean muscle mass, boost metabolism and help you shed the pounds. I tell my participants, “You should want and need recovery in between intervals or they aren’t ‘high intensity’ intervals ...they are just intervals.”

HIIT training can help increase speed, power, endurance and metabolic rate, helping you burn fat faster. Professional athletes incorporate HIIT into their workout routines because it has been proven to improve athletic performance. Study after study confirms that HIIT training works... all you have to do is Google search it!

There are many ways to create high intensity intervals. A few pointers:

- Don’t do HIIT on consecutive days –muscles need recovery.
- Change up your intervals every few weeks – keep the body guessing which may be the reason you started interval training anyway.
- Always warm up and cool down– espec. If you incorporated plyometric moves.
- Length of workout, timing of intervals (work/rest) is changeable.

My favorite type of HIIT is Tabata Training.

Tabata intervals can be incorporated into riding a bike, running, using your body weight, doing plyometrics and strength training, but there is one variable that doesn't change—the formula. A Tabata interval consists of eight cycles of 20 second all-out effort, followed by 10 seconds of recovery totaling 4 minutes. You can do as many Tabata intervals in a row as you'd like but for most fitness enthusiasts, if you are going full out effort, 20-30 minutes is max.

Tabata is named after Dr. Izumi Tabata who discovered that he could shorten the training time and vastly improve fitness levels with a HIIT regimen. He worked with the Japanese speed skating team and developed a timed interval program as described above. His research challenged the notion that you need a lot of time and miles under your feet to see results.

TO get started:

My HIIT Class (Tabata style) consists of body weight exercises, strength exercises, calisthenics and plyometrics. I recommend starting with light weights the first few sessions to figure out your limits. During the 20-second work portion, you have to go all out so you should try for as many reps as you can do without compromising form or range of motion. In my class, I verbally coach my members to figure that out. The funny thing is often newbies will keep working through the 10 second rest segments in the first Tabata interval due to their adrenaline kicking in...but quickly realize they are gasping for air and will be flat on the floor if they don't use their 10 second rest segments wisely.

Sample of a 45 minute HIIT Class using Tabata intervals:

Basic athletic warm up - 7 minutes

8 Tabata intervals =each interval is 4 min. Total time = 32 minutes

Cool down and stretch = 6 minutes

Sample Tabata interval:

- Work Cycle 1: 20 sec-Squat w/ overhead press
- Rest Cycle 1: 10 sec
- Work Cycle 2: 20 sec-high knees
- Rest Cycle 2: 10 sec
- Work Cycle 3: 20 sec-pushups
- Rest Cycle 3: 10 sec
- Work Cycle 4: 20 sec-burpees
- Rest Cycle 4: 10 sec
- *REPEAT Cycle 1-4 again for Cycle 5-8

Tabata timer:

As a fitness instructor, it helps to have a timer to be accurate with the intervals. When verbally coaching my class, it's hard to keep track of time which is why I use the Tabata Pro App on my iPhone or iPad. For \$2.99, it's been worth the money. Many of my members have downloaded it onto their phones so they can take HIIT class on the road. The only thing you need to do a HIIT workout is your body and a way to time your intervals. Check it out on iTunes:

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tabata-pro-tabata-timer/id346432063?mt=8>

Strategies to market and advertise your HIIT class:

- Use creative marketing – slogans HIIT IT HARD, HIIT HAS IT ALL
Use social media – educate and empower your fans and followers. Create closed groups for discussion and advice.
- Share HIIT workouts to do on the road – many executives travel – give them the tools to do it on their own so when they are back in town, they come back to class – consistency!
- Have themes and contests
- Offer various times throughout the day to fit needs of your audience. Vary the equipment used.

More questions, comments? Join me at :

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