

A man with a beard and tattoos is working out in a gym. He is wearing a black tank top and is holding two thick black battle ropes. He has a determined expression on his face. In the background, there are several orange kettlebells hanging on a rack.

3 MOST COMMON MISTAKES WITH HIIT WORKOUT PROGRAMS

MAPS FITNESS PRODUCTS



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HIIT training aka high intensity interval training is all the rage. When I walk into gyms these days its common place to see people stringing several exercises together going from one to another without rest sometimes even adding some form of high intensity sprint style cardio into the mix. These people sweat and grunt and push through these crazy looking workouts in, what I assume, is the pursuit of a leaner body. This approach to weights and fat loss is relatively new. Back when I first became a personal trainer over 20 years ago this type of training style was rare. Back then trying to lose body fat was all about the lower intensity cardio machines and/or aerobics classes also known as LISS (low intensity steady state). This begs the question....why the sudden switch in approach...and if its due to better effectiveness, why are a majority of people still incredibly frustrated with their lack of results? Before I get into answering those questions (and believe me there are CLEAR answers to those questions) lets first dive into the SCIENCE of HIIT training and why scientific study was actually the main driver of the growing interest in HIIT and why HIIT started replacing LISS as the golden child of fat loss training.

LISS training used to be the way people trained to burn body fat. LISS is low intensity steady state...think of a very slow but long duration jog or a sitting on a piece of cardio equipment for 30-90 minutes. This is still a popular way of trying to burn body fat but 20 years ago it was THE only way. Its what us rookie trainers recommended to ANYONE who had fat to lose.

Then came the studies that blew everyone's mind. One by one studies were published that compared HIIT style training to LISS style training in terms of body fat loss and they all concluded the same thing. For fat loss doing shorter but much higher intensity bouts of cardio or exercise was superior to doing the lower intensity but longer bouts of cardio. In other words if you did a high intensity session of sprints for 15 minutes you were better off in fat loss terms than if you did a slow jog for twice as much time.

WOW...the viral and sales opportunity from this news was incredible. As a personal trainer we could now tell people to cut their total cardio time in half or more and still burn more body fat!!! People ate it up and soon everyone was doing HIIT training. Yet...we still didn't see the crazy results in our clients that we thought we would see. It wasn't a panacea for fat loss after all. Why??? Why isn't HIIT making a dent in the most common goal among all gym members?

As I became more experienced and much better at my job as a personal trainer the answers to that question started to become CRYSTAL clear. I have now identified 3 main mistakes people make when trying to use HIIT for fat loss. If you steer clear of the following mistakes and if you apply HIIT the right way (and if your diet is in check) you will see fast and dramatic fat loss. So, without any further ado here are the top 3 fat loss killer mistakes with how people apply HIIT training...





MISTAKE ONE

ZERO MOBILITY PROGRAMMING

Joint pain, muscle dysfunction and injury are **EASILY** the biggest reasons people stop training with HIIT. I would venture to say that injury rates are higher in HIIT training versus other forms of training. Part of this has to do with the intensity applied to HIIT (more on that later) but a large part has to do with an almost universal **IGNORANCE** of mobility training. Almost no HIIT program pays any attention to mobility and stability training...**NONE AT ALL**. This is a **HUGE** mistake.

How your body moves is controlled by your muscles and how they “recruit.” Recruitment is how muscles fire, when they fire and how strongly they fire. Good recruitment will give you good ranges of motion (think flexibility) with good control (think **STRONG** flexibility), stability when changing directions, and the ability to apply intensity without fear of losing control. All of these are **PARAMOUNT** when it comes to HIIT training because the very nature of HIIT training is to train hard and to use different movements.

If you have poor mobility like most people do then going from exercise to exercise and training hard is a perfect recipe for injury. In fact I would go as far as to say you are guaranteed injury. Imagine training your butt off HIIT style for a couple months and then **BOOM** you hurt yourself or you start to develop pain in your knees, back or hips. Bye bye fat loss and hello sitting on the couch erasing everything you have trained so hard to achieve.

Even if you somehow avoid pain and injury from a mix of poor mobility and HIIT training you are still NOT getting the best results from your efforts. Poor mobility LIMITS how hard you can train and it limits the exercises you can pick from. In this case your body is limited so your RESULTS are limited.

THE SOLUTION

The solution is simple...spend as much time working on mobility as you spend on HIIT. If you make mobility part of your training priorities, you will avoid the most common pitfalls that accompany this awesome style of training and you will get those fat loss goals effectively and efficiently with less time spent in the gym.



MISTAKE TWO

POOR EXERCISE PROGRAMMING

The first two letters in HIIT stand for HIGH INTENSITY. Intensity is what separated HIIT from other forms of fat loss training and, although intensity is very important, it become the sole focus. Exercise selection, exercise order, repetition tempo and even repetition ranges become an after thought at best and at worst become non important factors in most HIIT training programs.

This is crazy. The exercises you pick matter a LOT...in fact they are just as important or maybe even MORE IMPORTANT than the intensity you apply. Pick the wrong exercises and you may find yourself building and sculpting a physique that not only doesn't look quiet right (how bad would it suck to get lean but still not look good) but it also isn't burning fat as effectively as it could.

Even though any exercise can be done intensely and can make you sweat you need to know that not all exercises are created equal. Although this may sound obvious it certainly isn't to the "coaches" and online "trainers" who mish mosh exercises together for their ineffective HIIT programs. Burpees are mixed

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with jump squats and rope jumping because "its will kick your ass man" with ZERO thought going into how those exercises might train and develop the body.

The right exercise selection, combination, order of application and rep tempo will make a HUGE difference in both your experience and your results...just like they do for any other type of training. It can literally cut the time it takes to burn off that body fat you want to get rid of so bad in half and it can also develop muscle in truly appealing ways so that, at the end of your fat loss journey, you look lean, sculpted and you possess a body that is pleasing to the eye.

It's not all about sweating and training hard...what you do matters as much as how hard you do it. Spend time putting your exercises together or hire a good trainer to do it for you. Or try some reputable time tested HIIT programs from online sources.



MISTAKE THREE

HARDER IS BETTER

Although intensity (how hard you train in HIIT) is important and is what separates HIIT from other forms of training, that does NOT mean more is better. In fact the opposite is true past a certain point. If you abuse intensity you will quickly find that your body rebels and will show signs of overtraining in which case fat loss becomes all but impossible and muscle loss becomes a sad reality.

Your body has a finite ability to handle stresses and exercise is a stress. Its why your body changes after a good workout. Your body literally is aiming to ADAPT to this stress by becoming stronger and more fit so that next time, with the same workout, it won't be challenged and stressed like it was before.

BUT if you OVER apply intensity you can and will overcome your bodies ability to adapt and instead will find yourself in a state of constant recovery. This is when you go to the gym, workout a little too hard, find yourself sore the next couple days, recover and repeat the cycle only to find that this cycle, even when repeated over and over again, produces LITTLE TO NO RESULTS. So frustrating. Imagine working hard week in and week out with NO RESULTS. That SUCKS.

Intensity is a tool with all workouts not just HIIT, and like any tool, needs to be applied in the right amount. Too little and you progress slowly, too much and you get hurt, sick or your body just refuses to adapt (become more fit) and instead just recovers with no results. Its extremely important to understand HOW to apply intensity if you want to get great results which is why I always recommend people err on the side of "easier."

It's a lot more effective to go easy at first to feel things out and to slowly ramp up intensity as the body progresses and as body fat starts to melt off. The reverse is a nightmare...starting too hard and then trying to find the right amount of intensity after the fact is an uphill battle. It takes more time, more skill and your body will already be in a state of protection which means you would have to take time off to allow for full recovery before trying again...and taking time off can be a huge roadblock if motivation is a problem for you (like it is for MOST people).

Once you get the ball rolling don't stop. The drop off rate explodes when people take a week or two off of training and over applying intensity is a great way to ensure you will need to take a "break." I always recommend people start slow to gauge their bodies ability to adapt and to slowly and gradually increase intensity as they become more fit.

That's it. The fact that you are reading this article shows that you are interested in maximizing your efforts which is a great sign. Now all you have to do is apply what you have learned to your HIIT training, be consistent and eat a good diet and you will hit those fat loss goals faster than you ever thought possible.





SAL DI STEFANO

Sal was 14 years old when he touched his first weight and from that moment he was hooked. Growing up asthmatic, frequently sick and painfully skinny, Sal saw weightlifting as a way to change his body and his self-image. In the beginning, Sal's body responded quickly to his training but then his gains slowed and then stopped altogether. Not one to give up easily, he began reading every muscle building publication he could get his hands on to find ways to bust through his plateau. He read Arnold's Encyclopedia of Bodybuilding, Mentzer's Heavy Duty, Kubrick's Dinosaur Training, and every muscle magazine he could find; Weider's Muscle and Fitness, Flex, Iron Man and even Muscle Media 2000. Each time he read about a new technique or methodology he would test it out in the gym. At age 18 his passion for the art and science of resistance training was so consuming that he decided to make it his profession and become a personal trainer. By 19 he was managing health clubs and by 22 he owned his own gym. After 17 years as a personal trainer he has dedicated himself to bringing science and TRUTH to the fitness industry.