

## The Importance of Exercise

Nothing will age your body faster than the absence of exercise. That's why I always say that any exercise is better than no exercise. However, some exercises are better than others. For instance, you should distinguish between recreational exercise and intense conditioning exercise. Examples of the former are walking or hiking at a moderate pace, cycling or swimming at a leisurely pace, dancing or playing many sports. Intense exercise includes such things as running wind sprints, engaging in short bursts of Russian kettlebell exercises, intense sprints on a bicycle or even on an elliptical machine, etc. Intense exercise means building an oxygen debt and breathing very hard for short periods. It means reaching your maximal capacity and is the opposite of long runs or cycling tours because intense exercise relies on fast twitch muscle fibers and moderate long distance exercise relies on slow twitch muscle fibers.

Intense interval exercise also forces your pituitary to secrete human growth hormone or HGH as a result of the oxygen debt it causes. HGH is anabolic and helps people to build muscle, lose fat and maintain better skin tone than those who eschew this type of exercise. Walking on a treadmill for an hour or is not as beneficial as 30 minutes of high intensity sprint intervals that cause you to reach maximum capacity. Intense exercise will do more to build your overall exercise capacity than anything else which is the key to a long and healthy life as proven by studies at Stanford University. More than 6,200 men (average age 59) were studied and those with the highest exercise capacity were healthiest and those with the lowest exercise capacity had four times the risk of death.

Here is my recommendation for a 20 to 30 minute high intensity interval workout. First stretch and do some warm up exercises for 5 to 10 minutes. Your workout may be done on a running track, stationary bike or with Russian kettlebells. If on a bike or running track go at top speed for 30 seconds followed by a recovery period until your heart rate and breathing return to normal. Experiment with the tension on a stationary bike until you find just the right amount so that you go breathless at the end of the interval. Repeat 10 to 15 times. With a kettlebell select the heaviest you can swing with good form for one minute then recover. Kettlebell weight will vary with your size and strength. Repeat 10 to 15 times. You will know if you did this right if you go breathless at the end of each interval. If you didn't go breathless increase your pace or tension so that you do or select a heavier kettlebell to swing.

Now here is the really important finding concerning this kind of exercise. Researchers in England found that people who exercised intensely had longer telomeres than those who did not and were biologically 9 years younger than their more sedentary peers of the same chronological age. Remember, telomeres are found on the ends of your chromosomes and long ones promote a longer healthier life. You need only do this twice a week. The rest of the week do any other form of exercise you like and rest one or two days.

Kettlebell exercise is ideal because it replaces all cardio equipment, weights, medicine balls, etc. It provides both an outstanding cardio workout while building strength and improving balance and coordination. It makes joining a gym obsolete and it can be as intense as you like. **Call me at 240-888-5453 if you want to learn how to use kettlebells or want personal training.**

### References:

*The Longevity Edge* by M.Fossel, MD, PhD, G. Blackburn, D. Woynarowski, MD. John Wiley and Sons, 2011

