

HIIT: No pain, no gain!

High intensity interval training (HIIT) has received massive amounts of attention from scientists, doctors, fitness trainers and of course the average person. HIIT for many people has revolutionised their approach to exercise and fitness levels. HIIT boasts rapid improvement in cardiovascular fitness levels with increased calorie and fat burning – all delivered rapidly. Is it possible to attain such physical superiority in such a short period of time with HIIT? Lets investigate!

What is HIIT?

It is exactly what it says on the tin! HIIT is a form of exercise where activity is paced out in intervals – the physical demands of this exercise form are highly intensive and they come in intervals. So you should not expect to have the same level of activity throughout the workout, rather, you have intense bursts of activity that push you to your utmost maximum capacity. These are then followed by slightly longer activity levels that are designed to be slightly lower in intensity.

There are various regimens one can follow and can include a variety of regimens such as skipping, sprinting and cycling followed by moderate levels of activity compared to the latter, such as brisk walking. HIIT takes up less of your time compared to an average cardio session at the gym. Do not be mistaken, though. Despite it taking less time, HIIT is not about a raised heart rate; it tests your maximum physical capacity and necessitates an all-out effort.

What do the experts say?

Various aspects of health have been under scrutiny in conjunction with HIIT and scientific evidence has much praise for HIIT. A study carried out in Edinburgh demonstrated that insulin and glucose parameters were significantly improved in men who usually are not prone to activity. This finding has potentially beneficial outlooks for those individuals who are at high risk of developing diabetes or are already insulin resistant. Another study reiterated these results and found the HbA1C to be lowered in type two diabetic patients.

Not only is HIIT deemed beneficial in adults, a study carried out in Brazil found similar results in obese youth, with body mass being significantly reduced in HIIT in comparison to endurance training. The evidence, thus, is overwhelmingly positive and indicates that many biochemical and physical parameters of health can be improved with HIIT. A key question arises for certain individuals and patients of various conditions – is HIIT suitable for THEM?

Is HIIT suitable for all?

People who are accustomed to exercise may find getting into a HIIT routine, rather easy. However, HIIT remains an extremely physically demanding regimen and there may be social groups for whom this radical step is not suitable. For those who have led a sedentary lifestyle for the best part of their years, it may be worthwhile easing into exercise and acclimatising their bodies to slightly increased physical demands as opposed to placing an increased physical burden on themselves very suddenly. If your body has been used to a certain lifestyle, it may react negatively to a new state and end up causing more damage.

Exercise has been an important issue in those with heart failure and any physical activity must be approached with caution. Although exercise is generally recommended, be sure to get the go ahead from

your doctor, in order to ascertain what sort of exercise is going to be beneficial. Similarly, risks should not be posed by delving in HIIT all of a sudden.

It is also unorthodox to expect HIIT from individuals with a high body mass index, primarily, because their body may be unable to fulfil the demands of a workout demanding complete effort. Yes, there has been scientific evidence that HIIT has proven to be beneficial in obesity, however, it must be noted that no exercise form is uniformly beneficial for all individuals. It would be advisable to discuss exercise options with a specialised fitness trainer subsequent to a doctor.

Conclusion

Irrefutably, HIIT has many associated benefits and shows time and health boosting effectiveness. Nevertheless, the demands of HIIT are great and not everyone can or should be expected to give such high energy performances. If you have a high BMI, have not exercised for a while or suffer from any chronic condition particularly the heart and/or lungs – then be sure to gain expert advice before embarking on any exercise regimens.