

The Four Corners of Cardio :

The Keys to a Successful Cardiovascular Training Program

For many gym members, the science of their cardiovascular training consists of getting on the treadmill, hitting start, and hoping for the best. Unfortunately, this can lead to instant boredom and minimal results from the program. The best way to enjoy the benefits that cardio training can provide is to know the basic factors that make up a cardiovascular regimen:

1 – **Mode** – This refers to what you are actually doing to elevate your heart rate for an extended period of time. This can range from a treadmill to an elliptical machine, all the way down to jumping rope and swimming laps.

Tip: Pick something that you enjoy. The more you like doing something the arduous it will be. Don't feel confined to a machine!

2 – **Intensity** – Intensity is not a measure of how much you are sweating, but rather how close you are to your maximal effort. It is often measured by heart rate, but a measure that I have found to be more successful for clients is PRE, or Perceived Rate of Exertion. This is done by simply measuring effort on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 equaling an all out sprint. The intensity you choose should be commensurate with your physical ability.

Tip: Try varying your intensity by adding more intense “spikes” to your program, followed by a complete recovery and then repeat.

3 – **Duration** – This is simply how long you do the activity continuously.

Tip: Just do it! Many people are intimidated by popular standard recommendations of a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes. Research shows however that three 10 minute bouts throughout the day produced greater results than one 30 minute continuous workout.

4 – **Frequency** – This refers to how many times per week that you perform the workout.

Tip: Try to schedule your cardio training sessions earlier in the day, as it will help boost your energy for the day, whereas late night training may affect sleep patterns and

recovery.

The biggest key to success is to manipulate these factors continually to always keep your body in a state of adaptation, whereas you will keep seeing positive results. The body adapts to specific stimulus with cardio training rather quickly, as often as every 7-10 days. Simply changing what mode of exercise you use every week or two keeps you ahead of these plateaus and will insure you continued progress.

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