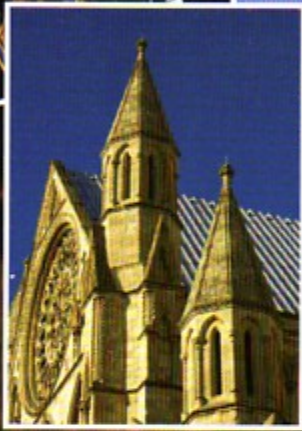
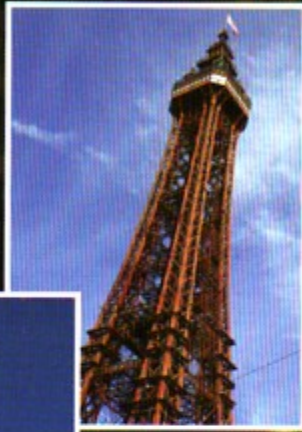
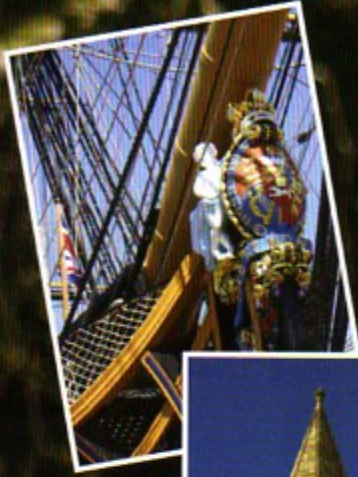


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Inside: More English Icons: Cricket... HMS Victory... York Minster ... Blackpool Tower



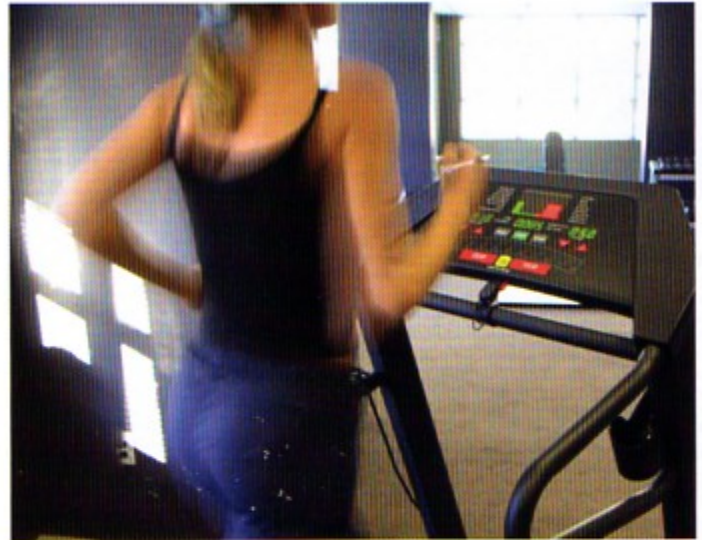
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LESS DEFINITELY *is* MORE!

It's a far cry from PE and PT. Today's keep fit fanatics have a whole new range of acronyms and acrobatics to worry about – BD, for example, and BMI, plus LBM and THR*... to name but a few. Fitness coach **Craig O'Toole** explains the meaning behind HIIT, and outlines some of the benefits.

HIIT – or High Intensity Interval Training – has been used for many years by elite athletes to get themselves into the best possible shape in the shortest amount of time. It comprises short intervals of high intensity work (i.e. fast running on the treadmill) followed by intervals of low intensity work (i.e. walking on the treadmill) – and it really works. Recent research at the Laval University, Quebec, has shown that HIIT is not only a great way to increase cardiovascular fitness, but also the best way to burn fat. The study compared two groups of people – the first did steady state endurance cycling five times per week; the second combined steady state endurance and HIIT five times per week. After 21 weeks the HIIT group had burned nine times as much fat as the endurance group!

However, join almost any gym or fitness club, and during your induction you're likely to be told that the best way to burn fat is to work at around 50-60% of your maximum heart rate, for at least 30-40 minutes continuously. This advice is not wrong in itself, and there have been many studies to show that this is a good way to burn calories and thus lose pounds – but after the initial enthusiasm for a slimmer fitter you have worn off, this kind of repetitive low-intensity long-duration training can become mind-numbingly boring. You only need to look around your local gym to see many people plodding away on CV equipment that has the kind of information display that would not look out of place on the USS Enterprise. Most people, however, cover up this multitude of data with a towel – simply because they do not want to know how much longer or farther they need to go. They're bored already!



The advantage of HIIT is that the work is broken down into smaller more manageable chunks and you constantly have a short term target. Before you realise it you are on the home straight, and (dare I say it?) you might even have enjoyed yourself. Plus, you will be safe in the knowledge that in the next 24 hours your body will burn more calories and thus more fat, and you only need to spend half the time in the gym – great!

So how can HIIT training help the average gym goer who's keen to get fitter and lose that last bit of pre-summer bulge? The answer is very simple. Before starting HIIT training you must first make sure that you have a reasonably good level of cardiovascular fitness and have already undertaken at least eight weeks of continuous endurance training. Be warned: HIIT is not for the novice as the increased intensity of the workout can lead to injuries for people who are unused to exercise.

A basic program might consist of

- 5 minutes warm up on the CV machine you're intending to use, at about 60% of your maximum heart rate.
- Increase the speed/gradient etc so that your heart rate is 80-90% of your maximum for 1 minute. This is your work phase.
- Reduce the speed/gradient etc so that your heart rate returns to 50-60% of your maximum. This is your rest phase.

At first, aim to repeat the work/rest phase four or five times. As you get fitter you can increase the number of work and rest sessions. At the end of the workout, reduce the intensity for five minutes to cool down and finish with a stretch. Ideally depending on age, fitness, health etc you should aim for 2-3 HIIT sessions per week.

If you stick to this program and try to make small improvements every session you will be burning more calories, increasing your cardiovascular fitness and spending less time in the gym every week – which, let's face it, is what we all want.

*BD = Body Density; BMI = Body Mass Index
LBM = Lean Body Mass; THR = Target Heart Rate

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