

People always ask me in the gym: how long to do cardio for fat burning. It's a one sentence question but the answer unfortunately can't be that short.

I'd say that knowing how long to do cardio for fat loss comes after you are clear about how much calories you should eat a day in order to lose fat.

Why? Because if you don't know how much you eat or if you eat a lot more than you expend then there is a little chance that you'd lose any fat. Not even if you were doing lengthy cardio sessions. You'd lose muscle tissue, though. That's for sure.

Any way, this is an essential topic but if you've gotten to the point where you are asking about the duration of the cardio I will assume that you've already got the diet part down.

Now, how long to cardio for fat burning can be understood in two different ways: For how many weeks or months (I believe you are not thinking days!!) do I have to do cardio to get in a good shape? Or how long in duration a cardio session should be for effective fat loss.

I'd answer the first question like that: You will do cardio for as long as it takes. You will do it till you reach your goal. It might be 3 months, or it might be 2 years. It all depends on your current shape and your desired final destination.

But keep in mind you should be losing not more than 2lb a week. 1lb is ideal. And it should all come from fat and not muscle tissue.

To the second question I will need to talk (type) a little longer.

In order to be effective at doing cardio you need to know these basic rules:

You are better off doing cardio in the morning on an empty stomach or any time during the day, after the workout with weights. The reason being only then your glycogen stores (your own carbohydrate stores) will be depleted or at least very low. In this situation your body will resort to using fat for energy.

That was the first thing. The second thing you should consider is: Do you intend to do regular cyclical cardio or high intensity interval training (HIIT) cardio?

Whichever you choose start by doing it three times a week. Do 15-20min regular or 6-8min HIIT. Keep it there for a week and then increase the first with 5min or if you are doing the second – with 3min. Keep increasing each week till you reach 40min for the regular cardio or 20min for the HIIT.

At this point if you are not seeing any results, insert another cardio session for a total of four cardio sessions a week. Wait another week and check again for any changes. If you start seeing results in the form of fat loss then continue doing what you are doing. It works.

If you are not seeing results, increase the cardio sessions to 5 per week. Give it a week and assess the situation again. I bet at this point you should be seeing some decent changes already. Keep it there.

But if not or if your body has adapted to that higher level of activity, then your weapon is to increase the cardio sessions to 6 a week.

Once that stops working for you and if you still need to lose fat, begin by inserting a second cardio session some time during the day but hours apart from the first one. You will do two cardio sessions three times a week and only one for the other three.

You get the idea: Start with three short cardio sessions a week. Gradually increase the duration. Then increase the number of cardio sessions up to 6 per week.

And if needed, start the same process over to pair each cardio session with another one again till you reach the 2 cardios, twice every day, 6 times a week situation. I doubt it, though, that you will ever need to get to that point. I'm just describing the principle so that you know how to do it.

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