

MODEL NAWAZ MODI SINGHANIA



Engaged in a low-impact cardio-vascular aerobic routine



Skating is a great cardio exercise and also helps in toning and strengthening a lot of those lower body muscles

# GET FIT HEARTY

Cardio Fitness is essential for general good health and for losing excess fat. **Nawaz Modi Singhania** explains the benefits and dos and don'ts of heart-lung fitness routines

## Cardio-Respiratory Fitness

IN simple language, it is working on one's heart-lung fitness and efficiency. Any physical activity, which gets your pulse up into a certain bracket, and maintains it there, qualifies as a cardio activity. It is recommended for its fat-reducing effect. Cardio activities can range from walking, jogging, swimming, skipping, stair climbing, skating, cycling and a racket game, to an aerobic class-step, slides, box aerobics, workouts, etc.

## Benefits Of Cardio Fitness

The range of benefits of regular cardio activity is huge and includes fat and inch loss, increased strength, endurance, flexibility, mental alertness, self-confidence and cardiovascular efficiency; improved sleep and radiant health. It also decreases physical fatigue, resting heart rate, blood pressure and creates stronger bones. Even if you suffer from certain chronic ailments, cardio exercise has its advantages. Some of the conditions under which you can exercise and benefit are:

**Asthma/Bronchitis:** Improves lung efficiency

**Insulin Dependent Diabetes:** Reduces the need for insulin, as cardio exercise has an insulin-like effect on the body.

**Coronary Heart Disease:** Reduces high blood pressure, obesity, stress, high cholesterol levels and diabetes.

## Dos And Don'ts

Cardio activity comes with its own prerequisites of what you should do and what you shouldn't, so that you gain optimum benefits from it.

## Water Baby

Stay well hydrated. Drink water before, during and after your workout. This will ensure that the water lost through sweat is replaced quickly, and that you don't overheat, and are able to continue burning fat during the session.

During your workout make sure you don't gulp water; sip it instead. Gulping can lead to a stitch or a cramp.

## Breaking In And Easing Out

Remember to always warm up and cool down. Inadequacy in this department is a major cause of injuries. The warm up ought to include a combination of stretches, whole body moves and limbering exercises which will get the muscles and heart ready to work. The cool down aims at bringing

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your heart rate back to near-normal levels, and to help stretch and relax the muscles you have worked so hard. Cooling down is important as leaving the muscles in a contracted state could cause stiffness and soreness, which is typical 24-48 hours post-exercise.

### Pace Yourself

Remember to work out at your own pace, and not someone else's. Compare yourself only to the 'you' of yesterday. Work at being better than you were the last time.

### Monitor Your Pulse

Get your instructor to help you monitor your pulse, in order to make sure you're in your correct fat burning zone (if that is a goal), or then outside of it (if it isn't). There are various ways of doing this. Speak to a professional about which one is best for you.

### Get In Gear

Wear comfortable clothes. Cottons are preferred as they allow the body to breathe easily, thereby facilitating body temperature regulation. Synthetics, like lycra and spandex are avoidable, as they don't let the skin breathe freely.

### The Right Shoes

Ideal trainers should have good forefoot flexibility in the forefoot area, along with adequate heel cushioning to counter the stresses on the Achilles tendon area and the other calf muscles. An air-soled pair of cross-trainers are ideal.

### One Step At A Time

If you're a novice at exercising, start gradually with just the legwork, and stick to low impact moves. Leave the arms loose by your side. Add the arms at a later stage. You'll find that you learn quickly, and the moves get easier.

### Keep Track Of Your Progress

Check your weight/measurements every three-four weeks. If you're doing this right, you should be losing 2.5 to 3.5 cm

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per area, per month. If not, then you need to re-examine what you're doing to ensure you've got it right.

### Do It Right

Any form of exercise performed incorrectly, without adequate attention to alignment, technique and form, or without adequate supervision, can lead to injury. It's crucial to incorporate the correct safety guidelines.

### Strength Train

No fitness regime is complete without the involvement of strength training. Weight or resistance training, some forms of yoga, pilates, etc all come under this bracket.

### The Right Balance

Find moderation and consistency in a combination of a sensible diet with exercise. Exercise aerobically at least three times a week, and gradually build it up to four-to five times, but no more than six. The body needs at least one day to rest and repair itself. Exercise continuously for 35-40 minutes, gradually building it up to 60.

### Load Up

Once your body gets used to a particular exercise, it is important to overload in order to continue seeing results. Your body gets immune to your workout! But give yourself time to adapt to the new activity before you decide to take on a more challenging level. One can overload by training harder, longer, or more often.

### Cross Train

The body gets immune to your workout and will show results only initially, so it's important that we keep challenging it differently. This can be done by cross training instead. You might want to rotate between walking, swimming and a racket game, or you might want to join a fitness centre which offers cross training. Feel good about the small changes you'll notice regularly. You'll start feeling better about yourself, you'll start getting stronger, and you'll be mentally more alert... the benefits are unending.

