

NorCal Feds FitTip: A well-rounded Fitness Program (Part 1)

My last FitTip talked to motivation to get and stay fit. This FitTip will go further and explain the components of a well-rounded fitness program.

There are three basic components that a fitness program should have – Cardiovascular Endurance, Muscular Strength and Endurance and Flexibility. Before we get started, however, please read the following:

The content of FitTips is for informational purposes only. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. You should always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health provider before beginning any exercise program or weight loss program.

This FitTip will cover the 1st component, Cardiovascular Endurance. The following two FitTips will cover Muscular Strength and Endurance and Flexibility.

Cardiovascular Endurance – Also known as, Aerobic capacity and Aerobic endurance (Aerobic means “with oxygen”). In general all of these terms refer to the ability of your heart, lungs and organs to consume, transport and utilize oxygen. When you exercise regularly, you can increase your cardiovascular fitness as your heart becomes more efficient at pumping blood and oxygen to the body, and the body becomes more efficient at using that oxygen.

Okay – so how does one do this?

1. **Aerobic training zone:** This is the heart rate zone in which you should train for maximum cardio benefit. It is 70-85% of your maximum heart rate. A quick and easy way to calculate maximum heart rate for you age is to subtract your age from 220. Example: a 45 year old would have an aerobic threshold of $(220-45) \times .70 = 122$ and $(220-45) \times .85 = 149$. So a generally healthy 45 year old should train with a heart rate between 122 and 149 for maximum cardio benefit.

2. **Fat burning zone:** Because of the way our bodies work, a person will burn more fat at lower heart rate training. To calculate your optimum fat burning zone use 55-70% of you maximum heart rate. So, our 45 year old would have a fat burning zone of 96 to 122.

The key to a cardiovascular training program is frequency, duration and intensity (being in the aerobic zone).

Frequency: 3 to 5 days per week. If you are just starting a program, start on the low end and gradually build.

Duration: 30 to 60 minutes per session. Again – if just starting out, do not over do it. You will either get discouraged or injured.

Intensity: The basics of intensity are discussed above. It is important that you raise your heart rate for (fat burning or aerobic training zones). Another method to check your intensity is: you should break a sweat but still be able to carry on a conversation... if you do this for the prescribed duration and frequency, you'll be on your way to a healthier life.

For Beginners: you may want to start a 3 day a week program for about 20 minutes each. As you get in better shape you can slowly increase both frequency and duration.

For Everyone: Build your cardio program around things that you enjoy doing: walking, jogging, running, biking, hiking, swimming, skiing, soccer, basketball, aerobics classes. I'm sure you can think of more... remember the key is sustained, increased heart rate,

Sources:

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

[American College of Sports Medicine](#)

Stay Fit for Life!