

# Interval training is a powerful tool for novice exercisers and accomplished athletes alike. Here's how it works.

[By Mayo Clinic staff](#)

Are you ready to shake up your workout routine? Do you wish you could burn more calories without spending more time at the gym? Consider aerobic interval training. Once the domain of elite athletes, interval training has become a powerful tool for the average exerciser, too.

## What is interval training?

It's not as complicated as you might think. Interval training is simply alternating bursts of intense activity with intervals of lighter activity.

Take walking. If you're in good shape, you might incorporate short bursts of jogging into your regular brisk walks. If you're less fit, you might alternate leisurely walking with periods of faster walking. For example, if you're walking outdoors, you could walk faster between certain mailboxes, trees or other landmarks.

## What can interval training do for me?

Whether you're a novice exerciser or you've been exercising for years, interval training can help you jazz up your workout routine. Consider the benefits:

- **You'll burn more calories.** The more vigorously you exercise, the more calories you'll burn — even if you increase intensity for just a few minutes at a time.
- **You'll improve your aerobic capacity.** As your cardiovascular fitness improves, you'll be able to exercise longer or with more intensity. Imagine finishing your 60-minute walk in 45 minutes — or the additional calories you'll burn by keeping up the pace for the full 60 minutes.
- **You'll keep boredom at bay.** Turning up your intensity in short intervals can add variety to your exercise routine.
- **You don't need special equipment.** You can simply modify your current routine.

Source: Mayo Clinic – [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)