

HIIT Workout

How to Create Amazing Home HIIT Workouts

HIIT stands for High Intensity Interval Training and is currently one of the most popular health trends to hit the industry.

The basic idea behind HIIT is simple: you alternate between periods of high intensity, such as sprinting, and periods of lower intensity such as jogging. This is a form of training that allows us to burn more calories and enjoy better health benefits in a shorter space of time compared with many other types of training.

But while HIIT is a great tool for getting into shape, it's important to recognize that it's only as useful as the way in which you approach it. There are right and wrong ways to perform HIIT and a lot of people make the mistake of getting so excited with this new type of training that they forget to approach it in a structured and well thought-through manner.

In this guide then, we will be looking in detail at how you can go about making an amazing HIIT home workout that will help you to both build muscle *and* burn fat. You will see how to transform your body using this incredible form of training and you will learn some incredibly powerful strategies for getting even more from it.

HIIT: The Basics

Before we get into a lot of detail regarding how you can go about enhancing a typical HIIT workout, it first makes sense for us to recap on precisely what HIIT is to begin with, how it works and what makes it such a powerful and useful method for getting into shape.

What does alternating between higher and lower intensity actually do to the body and why is this so transformative for weight loss?

Essentially, when you engage in high intensity exercise, this is classified as anything where your heart rate is exceeding 90% of its maximum. That means you're working as hard as you can and placing a massive demand on your body's systems to supply energy.

That in turn means that you're going *too fast* for your body to rely on the aerobic system – which is what it uses when you engage in regular 'steady state' cardio (cardio training where you jog at a relatively slow pace).

Because you're going too fast, this means that you need a more efficient form of energy, which means the body has to use the stored glycogen and ATP that is already in your muscles. This can only last so long before you get a build up of metabolites and reach your 'lactate inflection point' at which you will be forced to slow down and return to your aerobic system.

What's so great about this, is that you are now training your efficiency and your body's ability to exert itself at maximal levels. Moreover, this will change the way your body reacts to regular aerobic exercise subsequently. Specifically, because you will have used up all the glycogen and ATP that's immediately available to your muscles during the intensive exercise, you will find that your body becomes more efficient at burning calories that it gets from fat for the remainder of the workout. You then jog for as long as it takes to restore your glycogen and to remove the lactate in the blood, and can then return to exercise. This is not only great training for improving athletic performance (it can improve your lactate threshold, which in turn is incredibly useful for increasing your running ability); but it is also *incredible* for fat burning.

This is partly because you then continue the rest of your day with lower levels of glycogen after you have finished exercising. With these lower levels of glycogen, you'll then be forced to burn fat even for regular activities such as walking around and climbing stairs. This then causes what is known as the 'afterburn effect' – which leads to enhanced fat burn for the rest of the day following a HIIT workout.

For these reasons, HIIT is able to help you improve your athletic performance and fitness more than regular cardiovascular exercise and it is also able to help you burn a *lot* more calories.

Moreover, HIIT is also superior when it comes to convenience (because you can use a range of different exercises) and time – you can get a full HIIT workout in half the time or less compared with a regular cardio workout.

This is the power of HIIT, but you're about to learn how to get even *more* from it!

How to Craft the Perfect Fat Burning Workout

The first thing we're going to look at when it comes to crafting the perfect fat burning workout, is the type of exercise you perform.

When you engage in regular steady-state cardio (running for 40 minutes at the same pace for example), you only really have a few different things to choose from. These include:

- Running
- Skipping
- Rowing
- Swimming
- Cycling

And a couple of others. These are relatively low impact exercises that can be continued endlessly for over an hour without too many negative repercussions. That said, even just jogging for that long will have some negative impacts on your health and particularly on your knees.

Conversely, HIIT workouts are ideal because they break the exercise up into smaller, more palatable chunks. This means that you can exercise using more intensive and potentially impactful moves and not fatigue your joints or your muscles too quickly.

For example, you can't use press ups for a steady state cardio workout. But you *can* use press ups during a HIIT workout.

Likewise, you can't use weights for a CV workout but you *can* use them for a HIIT workout!

If you use a split where you go all-out for 30 seconds and then rest for 1 minute, there's nothing to stop you using even compound movements like deadlifts and bench press (well, there is a caveat here, which we'll get to in a moment).

Now you are combining a resistance (weights) workout with a cardio workout. By doing both at the same time, you're performing what is sometimes referred to as 'resistance cardio' and also known as 'concurrent training'.

Concurrent training immediately forces you to use more explosive power. In order to move your limbs against weights or other resistance, you need to recruit more of your explosive, fast-twitch muscle fibers than you do when there is *no* resistance like this. Fast twitch muscle fiber requires more energy (because it contains more mitochondria) and therefore, you are forced to use more energy.

Simply by performing concurrent training, you are now burning more calories than you otherwise would be!

And what's more, you are now causing more muscle damage. Concurrent training causes microtears in the muscle fiber and it causes the build-up of metabolites in the muscle (which create the feeling of 'pump'). This means that you're able to build muscle as well as burning fat and it causes the release of anabolic hormones to trigger this.

But anabolic hormones don't only build muscle, they also burn fat. And so simply by including resistance work in your cardio, you will burn more fat and more calories than you otherwise would have.

Then there's the added bonus that concurrent training allows you to tone up your muscle. This has two benefits: for starters, it is actually the more effective way to get a shapely and toned body. A lot of people believe that they need to lose weight in order to get great abs and thinner legs but actually, it's often muscle that they're looking for.

For example, did you know that toning muscle is *by far* the more effective way to get rid of cellulite? If you just lose weight but don't tone, then you're *not* going to lose the wrinkles that come from cellulite.

Likewise, if you have a gut that you feel hangs out, the best way to improve that is actually to strengthen and tone your transverse abdominis. This is the band of muscle that runs around your midsection. The job of this muscle is to support your lower spine and help you maintain an upright posture but it is *also* to hold your stomach and organs in. This is a great way to improve your posture and to give you a washboard stomach.

If you want to be 'sexy', then it isn't enough to just burn calories!

And finally, toning muscle like this also has the added advantage of increasing your resting calorie burn. Muscle is more 'metabolically active' as compared with fat and that means that simply *having* more muscle means that you burn calories. When you're sleeping, if you have a muscular frame you will actually lose a lot of weight as you rest!

Thus, just like HIIT itself, concurrent training is useful for boosting your weight loss both in the immediate aftermath *and* in the time that follows.

The Best Form of Concurrent Training for HIIT

So what is the best type of concurrent training for HIIT? If your aim is to burn fat while building muscle, what is a good exercise to use?

There are plenty of options and some good ones include punching a heavy bag or using battle ropes.

Perhaps the best option of all though, is to use kettlebell swings. A kettlebell is a large iron ball with a handle on the end, that has the interesting advantage of moving the center of gravity while you use it. As you curl, the direction of the resistance changes and thereby you keep challenging the body in different directions to challenge the smaller supporting muscles and the balance.

What's more, is that this allows you to build up momentum and you'll find that the kettlebell eventually swings on its own accord almost. Your job is simply to keep up the pendulum motion, which is zero impact and an ideal form of resistance training for maintaining for longer periods.

Kettlebell swings also build the muscles in the legs, buttocks and lower back. Specifically, they work the ‘posterior chain’, which means that you’ll be able to not only improve your athletic explosiveness for jumping and running but also that you’ll be able to build a very attractive posterior! A lot of people swear by kettlebell swings in order to get sexy legs, bums and tums.

To perform the movement, grab the weight with both hands and stand up straight with it hanging in front of you. Your legs should be about shoulder’s width apart and now you’re going to squat down and allow the weight to move between your legs as you do. Then, thrust back upward, and thrust your hips forward as you do so. This will propel the weight forward and upward and you should allow it to reach the point where your arms are outstretched and the weight is at shoulder height.

Eventually, the weight is going to begin falling back down and thus you want to squat again, allowing it to swing between your legs again. You repeat this motion for as long as you can!

Begin by starting with 30 seconds of intense exercise and 1 minute of something easier, like holding squat position with bodyweight. Make sure that the weight is heavy enough that it is challenging you and forcing your heart rate to reach the high 90%. You can then start to increase the challenge by perhaps trying out tabata protocol (20 seconds of exercise, 10 seconds of rest) or by using a heavier weight.

MetCon and Mixing it Up

HIIT will often be written to include two different stages. There will be the stage where you’re going full intensity and the stage where you’re exercising in a slightly gentler manner so that you can recover and fall back into the aerobic energy system.

But what if you had more than two intervals? What if you had ten intervals?

What if you sprinted, jogged and ran? What if you performed kettlebell swings with three different weights at two different paces?

This is what is known as ‘fartlek’. While the name might sound amusing, it actually translates as ‘time play’ and it simply means that you’re going to be switching between multiple different intervals and experimenting with training at variable intensities.

There is no need to rely solely on two stages and there is no reason you can’t experiment with multiple different types of training all at once. In fact, you don’t even need to divide your workouts into different time periods. Why not measure the intervals by distance? By repetitions? Or even by heart rate?

One interesting approach would be to train at full intensity for a set period of time – say 1 minute – and then to go at low intensity until your heart rate returns to 70% MHR. After that, you then resume going full intensity again!

This is not too far removed from something known as ‘MetCon’. MetCon is an abbreviation for ‘Metabolic Conditioning’ and the term is used broadly to describe various forms of exercise that involve organizing resistance exercises and calisthenics into a HIIT-style routine. For example, you might perform press ups, kettlebells and pull ups, along with tuck jumps. You can turn this into a circuit and you can then move from one station to the next, organizing each challenge in such a way that you’ll be moving between faster moves and slower moves to alternate your heart rate and to change up the intensity.

This is how a lot of the workouts you find on YouTube work. They will have titles like ‘10 minute fat burning workout’ and they will essentially be simple circuits that involve going from one station to the next.

But what these workouts often miss out, is the finesse that can be applied to designing a circuit in order to deliver maximum benefits. For example, they often fail to use high intensity movements that will build the heart rate up to 80% and instead, they involve much slower and less impressive exercises like lunges or sit ups that simply won’t get the heart rate as high.

Likewise, these workouts will often fail to think carefully about sequencing.

Remember when we said you could potentially use deadlifts for your workouts? That’s true: but you should really be using them at the point where your energy levels are fairly high. In other words, they should be at the start of your routines and you should avoid performing them at the end – especially after lots of cardio.

The reason for this, is that when you perform deadlifts, you are using multi-joint exercises that require a large amount of control and that involve heavy weights. This means there is a relatively high chance of injury and the more tired you are, the more likely you to let your technique suffer and to end up injuring yourself as a result.

Another tip, for a whole-body routine, is to try and mix up the stations so that you alternate between leg exercises and upper body movements. This way, you will be placing demands on your body to send blood, oxygen and nutrients to your legs and then placing the same demands at the other end of your system. Your heart will thus need to work over time to keep moving your blood up and down and by doing this, you will burn more calories than if you had simply performed lots of leg exercises in a row.

Finally, think about ways you can be more creative. We’ve already discussed how you can use fartlek for running and regular HIIT... why not devise a more fiendish and creative MetCon workout with concurrent training that will use various different amounts of time on each station, various different amounts of effort and a range of different heart rate zones. In other words, you could perform a heavy lift at the start of your workout, a 30 second recovery, a similar lift for 1 minute, a burst of high intensity on the kettlebells for 30 seconds and then go for a run for forty minutes following that. There’s no reason that a HIIT workout has to mean simply switching between two states. And actually, the more interesting you make your workouts, the better results you might get!

An example of a creative workout that is somewhat HIIT-like in its design is ‘cardio acceleration’. Here, you perform a regular weight lifting workout (lifting weights for sets of repetitions) but instead of resting for one minute in-between each movement, you instead perform high intensity cardio. This way, you can greatly increase the heart rate for the entirety of the workout and you can greatly increase the calories you burn.

Be creative, be thoughtful and design workouts that challenge all three of your energy systems!

Has this opened your mind to some new ways you can start training and using HIIT in particular? If so, then consider checking out the full ebook: *HIIT it Hard*. There, you will find some even more advanced techniques that we didn’t have time to cover here. You’ll learn about using tabata, about ‘finisher sessions’ and about the best time of day to train. We also look at how to combine different HIIT protocols with the right diet and the best supplements to enhance your results. Plus: how to burn far more calories, simply by thinking a little bit about the best time of day to train!

Check out the book to learn all this and more and for some much more details information regarding the way the body uses energy. Otherwise, why not get started with a more creative HIIT workout today? Go slow to begin with and pick something that won’t leave you completely defeated as that way, you’ll be more likely to stick with it! Once you’ve found a workout you enjoy, you can then focus on gradually increasing the challenge and the intensity until you’re melting through calories on a daily basis.

HIIT is an amazing tool for getting into shape. But if you know how to make the most of it, it can become even more powerful still!