21 Day Challenge

The Cardio Challenge



INTRODUCTION

The 21-day cardio challenge is a great way to jumpstart your fitness journey.

The challenge is simple: for 21 days, you commit to doing cardio frequently on a simple yet effective scheme.

This can be any type of cardio activity that you enjoy, from running to biking to swimming (we'll share our top 5 activities, so stay tuned!)

The key is to find something that you will stick with for the long haul.

The 21-day timeframe is just enough time to form a habit, so if you can make it through the challenge, you'll be well on your way to a healthier lifestyle.

And who knows, you might even find that you enjoy the cardio workout more than you thought you would!

So why not give the 21-day cardio challenge a try?

Let's get to it by first covering some fundamentals!



WHAT IS CARDIO?

Cardio activities are often lumped together and considered to be of one type.

However, there is more than one type of cardio activity. Aerobic activities are those that are long in duration and low in intensity.

These activities use oxygen and fat to fuel the activity.

An example of an aerobic activity would be walking at a moderate pace for an extended period of time.

On the other hand, anaerobic activities are shorter in duration and higher in intensity.

These activities do not use much oxygen and fat to fuel the activity as much as they use glucose.

Examples of anaerobic activities include sprinting or lifting weights.

While both types of activities can be classified as "cardio" due to the fact they make the cardiovascular system work, in this challenge, we'll focus on aerobic activities.

These activities help the body become more efficient with oxygen, thus improving endurance and circulation.



WHAT IS CARDIO?

When it comes to cardio, there are a host of health benefits associated with it.

For one, cardio helps to improve heart health by strengthening the heart muscles and increasing blood flow.

In fact, as science says: "Both aerobic and anaerobic exercises have unique and collective positive correlations towards improved CV (cardiovascular) health." [1]

In addition, cardio can help to burn calories and promote weight loss.

Finally, cardio can also help to boost mood and increase energy levels and can also be a great way to bond with people - after all, nothing beats a good training session with a buddy!

In short, there are many good reasons to make cardiovascular exercise a part of your regular routine, which is exactly why we're giving you this challenge!



CARDIO ACTIVITIES

There are many different types of aerobic activities to choose from, and the best one for you will depend on your fitness level, preferences, and goals.

If you enjoy running, for instance, you might want to consider making it a regular part of your cardio routine.

If you prefer something less strenuous, walking or biking are also excellent options.

No matter what you choose, the important thing is to get moving and raise your heart rate!

By doing so, you'll not only improve your cardiovascular health but also boost your energy levels and mood.

Now let's have a look at our top 5 cardio activities, which you can choose from as soon as you get to the challenge!



#1 Running
Though there are many activities that could be considered when seeking an aerobic cardio workout, running is by far the most popular.

There are many reasons for this: running is a relatively simple activity that can be done virtually anywhere, it doesn't require any special equipment or training, and it's an activity that can be easily scaled or down-scaled to any fitness level.

Besides, there are tons of ways to add complexity to running - be it running up a hill, in the sand, or even with some ankle weights!

#2 Swimming
Swimming is often thought of as a leisurely activity, but it can also be a great workout.

In fact, swimming is one of the best cardio workouts you can do.

It helps to strengthen your heart and lungs, and it also gives your entire body a workout.

Additionally, swimming is a low-impact activity, which means it is easy on your joints.

And because you are working out in the water, you are less likely to overheat than you would be if you were working out on land.

So if you don't like running but are still looking for a great way to get some cardio exercise, consider swimming.





#3 Rope Skipping
Rope skipping is often thought of as a playground activity for children, but it can actually be an excellent cardio workout for adults as well.

Unlike running, which can be hard on the joints, rope skipping is a low-impact activity that is easy on the body.

Furthermore, rope skipping can be just as effective as running when it comes to increasing heart rate and burning calories.

In addition, rope skipping is a great way to improve coordination and balance.

With all of these benefits, it's no wonder that rope skipping is gaining in popularity as a workout for adults.

And well, it is likely quite fun to rope skip with your kids!

#4 Cycling
Most people are familiar with the benefits of cardio exercise, but they may not realize that cycling is an excellent way to get their heart rate up.

In fact, cycling is one of the most efficient forms of cardio exercise, providing a low-impact workout that can be tailored to any fitness level.

And, unlike some other cardio activities, cycling can be enjoyed almost year-round, making it an ideal choice for those who want to stay fit and active no matter the season.

Whether you’re looking to improve your heart health or simply want a fun way to explore your surroundings, consider giving cycling a try.



THE CHALLENGE

Now without further ado, let's get right into the challenge scheme.

Why 21-days of the challenge, you may ask? Well, because this is generally considered the time needed for people to form a habit.

The scheme is simple - during week one, we'll find a baseline, and in the next two weeks, we'll improve on that and put ourselves through some sort of a challenge!

Now let's have a detailed look!

WEEK 1 - SET A DISTANCE

During week one of the challenge, choose one specific cardio activity and set a distance to complete.

The distance must be coverable, or in other words, you have to be able to go through it, at a certain pace, without stopping.

So, choose the cardio activity, set a distance, be realistic and go through 3-4 sessions during the first week to get comfortable with the distance.

During this first week, there is no type of completion time monitoring done - the goal is to just complete the distance, successfully in a couple of workouts.

WEEK 2 - INCREASE DISTANCE & MONITOR TIME

Week two is where it gets fun! During the second week, you will be putting yourself to the test, increasing and monitoring your completion time.

The first challenge is to increase the distance slightly - you went for a 1-kilometer run 4 times in a row?

Time to bump that up to 1.5 km, or if you're feeling capable, you can shoot for two!

Just make sure to keep it doable - don't overexert yourself.

After you set a distance, the goal is to now find out how long it takes you to complete the distance at a bearable pace.

Note: during week two, you don't really need to work on your time - the goal is to just find out your completion time and continue doing your cardio at a pace that allows you to match that time.



WEEK 3 - TOP YOUR BEST

During the third week, we get down to business! Now that you have your completion time checked from week two, it is time to put yourself to the test and beat that time.

This simply means that you will be running the same distance but at a quicker pace.

This is just another way to challenge the body and realize the principle of ‘progressive overload,’ which is essential for progress in any type of physical activity.

After you’re done with week 3, keep doing the same thing - increase the distance ever so slightly, monitor your time and try to beat it!



TIPS & TRICKS FOR THE LONG HAUL

Any type of physical activity has benefits, but statistically, most people who start an exercise routine will give up within a few months.

In fact, as many as 80 percent of people who sign up for a gym membership or any type of fitness challenge will never use or complete it.

So, what can be done to make exercise a lasting habit?

First and foremost, it's important to find an activity that you enjoy. If you dread running, you're much less likely to stick with it in the long run.

Instead, look for something that you can look forward to doing each day.

It could be a brisk walk in your neighborhood, biking through the park, or taking a dance class.

Once you've found your activity of choice, commit to doing it for 21 days, according to the scheme presented in this challenge!

Again - it takes about three weeks to form a new habit, so this is the perfect amount of time to develop a lasting love for exercise.

Finally, don't be too hard on yourself if you miss a day here or there.

Just get back on track and continue working towards your goal.

With perseverance and a positive attitude, you can make exercise a part of your life for years to come.

AN HONORABLE MENTION

Although aerobic activities like running or swimming have their own benefits, such as improving cardiovascular health, it is also a good idea to combine them with weight training.

By doing both types of activities, you will be able to stack up the benefits and improve your overall health even more.

For example, weight training can help to improve bone density, which can, in turn, help to prevent injuries when participating in aerobic activities.

In addition, combining the two types of exercise can help to increase muscle endurance and, well, make you look like a Greek statue.

As a result, if you are looking to improve your health, you should consider adding both aerobic and weight-training activities to your workout routine.

FINAL THOUGHTS

So, are you in? I am. Let's do this!

Are you feeling motivated and inspired now that you know about the 21-Day Cardio Challenge? I hope so!

This is going to be a lot of fun, and we are going to see some amazing results by the end.

Remember, it's not about perfection – it's about progress.

And if you fall off track one day, don't beat yourself up about it.

Just get back on track as soon as possible.

We can do this! Who's with me?

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