

## The Importance of Cardiovascular Training

Cardiovascular training, or aerobics, involves elevating your heart rate to 65-80% of its maximum for a sustained period of time (usually 20 minutes or more.) Regular cardiovascular activity will strengthen your heart muscle, increase the oxygenation capacity of your lungs, and offers a great calorie burning opportunity. Perhaps the best benefit, though, is that aerobic exercise stimulates the longer-term growth of the body's natural fat burning enzymes—this means that you'll burn more fat all the time, not just when you're exercising!

As with other types of training, the benefits of cardiovascular exercise are plentiful. As its name might suggest, cardiovascular training contributes to heart and circulatory health and conditioning, thereby helping to reduce the risks associated with hypertension, smoking and high blood cholesterol. Cardio exercise is also credited with playing a critical role in reducing anxiety, depression and other ailments.

### Target Heart Rate Ranges

To determine your target heart rate range, calculate the lower (65%) and upper limits (80%) of your age-predicted maximum heart rate:

$$\text{LOWER} = 220 - \text{Your age} \times .65 \qquad \text{Example: } 220 - 45 \times .65 = 113.75$$

$$\text{UPPER} = 220 - \text{Your age} \times .80 \qquad \text{Example: } 220 - 45 \times .80 = 140$$

In the example shown above, based on the age of 45, the target training range is 113 to 140 beats per minute.

Build at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity into your daily routine, whether you do it all at once or 2 segments of 15 minutes. By maintaining a cardiovascular component in your training schedule, you will begin to feel increases in energy levels, you'll tire less easily, and your body will begin to burn its fat stores more efficiently.