

# THE REAL WAY TO BURN FAT



HOW TO BURN FAT HAS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST CONFUSING, ONGOING DEBATES IN THE FITNESS WORLD.

Some choose long, slow exercise, whereas others believe hard, intense workouts for shorter periods are the way. Well, the real secret lies not in just one approach, but in combining these methods into a two-pronged approach to exercise. The rule of fat burning is to combine these two types of training: 1) long and slow; and 2) hard and intense (going for broke). This second type is sometimes referred to as interval training. When these two styles come together, it creates synergy in your body—a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. **That means burning more fat in less time.**

by  
Kathy Smith

## Create Your Own Fitness Plan

Many people spend most of their time working out at a slow, easy pace. This type of training, called “long-slow,” is often recommended for weight loss because studies show that it burns a higher percentage of fat than shorter, more intense workouts. So why not take it slow and easy all the time? Well, there are several reasons. First, your body will get used to this level of intensity and “flat line” your cardio capacity, resulting in a plateau that prevents you from increasing your regular calorie burn. Second, long-slow workouts can become boring—and if you lose motivation, guess what? You can lose your workouts too. And the third reason is perhaps the most important: when you crank up the intensity level, you maximize fat burn.

Interval training (turning up the heat for a short period of time during your workout) is what allows you to tap into hidden fat stores. Research shows that during an interval workout, fat-burning enzymes in the muscles increase to a much greater level than during moderate exercise. And burst training may be the only way to break down fat tucked deep inside the muscle into its fatty acid components so it can then be used as energy and burned off.

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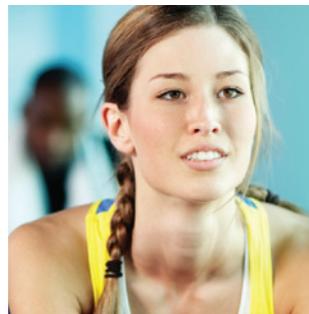
For more than 30 years, Kathy Smith has been at the forefront of fitness and exercise. She has developed dozens of books, DVDs, and products that have helped thousands of people get active and enjoy a lifetime of better health and fitness.



### Long, slow workouts: 3 to 4 days a week

These workouts are great for beginners. But whether you're a workout rookie or a true pro, long-slow workouts are also what allow you to recover in between the more intense workouts. You can't push yourself to the max every time. You'll burn out, get injured, or can even reverse your fat-burning capacity.

Scientists rate workout intensity as a percentage of maximum heart rate, or MHR. You can do this with a heart rate monitor, or you can try and gauge your energy expenditure by listening to your body and how you feel.



Alternating between your “happy face” and “battle-cry face” is the essence of interval training.

#### “HAPPY”

When you're at 60%–75% of your maximum, you've got a “happy face”; most of your long, slow training is in this range. At this level you feel great, you're relaxed, and you can keep going for a long time.

#### “DETERMINED”

At 75%–85%, that smile flattens out into a look of determination. You're not talking. You're focused—you are on a mission and entering into warrior mode.

#### “BATTLE CRY”

At 85%–95% you're giving near-maximum effort with a battle-cry face. You can just barely keep this up for a few minutes.

### Higher intensity interval workouts: 2 to 3 days a week

Somewhere between that happy face and battlefield grimace is your lactate threshold. At this point, your muscles are producing more of the waste product called lactic acid than they can clear away, and you start to feel the burn. As lactic acid builds, the burn increases until you finally feel you're going to collapse and you have to stop. Steady training in the happy face range never stretches that limit, so it never increases. But when you push yourself into the grimace range a few times a week, several exciting things happen:

- It raises the calorie count of your workouts.
- It tunes your aerobic system so you can clear your lactic acid more efficiently, allowing you to work harder and burn more calories even on your slow days.
- It raises your metabolism for several hours afterward.
- High intensity bursts can significantly increase the number of muscle fibers in play, improving muscle tone and further increasing your calorie-burning efficiency.

Also bear in mind that burst training—alternating spurts of low- and high-intensity cardio—will transform your long-slow workouts. After including interval workouts in your cardio training for a couple of weeks, your long-slow workouts will be easier to complete, and you'll be burning more calories in less time because you're fitter. Simple as that.

Can you have a full day off? Of course! There are plenty of ways to mix and match your workouts so you can get them all done and can take a full day off. Or, on that day, try something physical but less formal, like a friendly game of tennis or some gardening. After all, the key to staying fit is to stay motivated.