

Regular exercise is one of the most important activities to promote good health. There are two primary types of exercise, resistance and cardio. Resistance exercises help tone, strengthen and build muscles. Weight lifting is a typical resistance exercise. Cardio exercises help to increase endurance and strengthen the heart. Cardio exercises include any those that increase the heart and breathing rates. Jogging and aerobics classes are two examples.

There are some people who make time in their lives to spend four or five days a week at the gym. Like most of us, I don't have that kind of time in my schedule. As a result, I am always looking for ways to make my exercise program more efficient. One of the ways that I accomplish this is by combining my resistance and cardio exercises. My program is not for beginners, but you don't have to be in top shape to do it.

Most hard core weight lifters will exercise the upper body one day and the legs the next, giving each area a day to rest in between. Current research shows that it actually takes more than a day for the muscles to recover fully from strenuous exercise. It can actually be better to rest the muscles for two or more days between exercise sessions. This is good news for exercise advocates on a tight schedule.

Most weight lifters also perform several sets of exercise, resting in between to let their muscles recover from the previous set. Resting takes more time at the gym and it isn't necessary. My time-saving routine consists of working a muscle group continuously with no rest. This reduces my time at the gym. I also exercise my whole body in one session, so I spend fewer days at the gym. By keeping my pace up I not only work my skeletal muscles, but also my heart muscle, achieving the benefits of resistance and cardio exercises in one shot. I also only need to go to the gym one or two days a week.

Here is what I do and remember to consult with your doctor before engaging in this type of exercise unless you are already exercising and just want to try something different. My routine works best with pulley machines or dumbbells. I don't like taking time to change plates on free weights. I will start with a particular machine, set it at a weight where I can do about 8 to 10 repetitions before the muscle gets too tired to perform another repetition. The key is to take the muscle to fatigue.

Without resting, I will then reduce the weight one notch on the weight stack, or if using dumbbells, I will pick up the next lower dumbbell weight. I will perform the same exercise until I can't perform another repetition. I keep doing this sequence until I am on the lightest possible weight or until I can do twenty repetitions without fatigue. Then I move on to the next machine or muscle group.

If I keep the pace up, I will achieve a very good resistance workout and a reasonably good cardio workout. I can usually complete this routine in one and a half hours. A great workout in only three hours a week. If you think that you don't have three hours a week, consider that if you don't exercise, you are much more at risk of developing a wide variety of illnesses and you will probably find yourself spending much more than three hours a week in doctor and hospital waiting rooms.