

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AEROBIC TRAINING ONLY?

By Richard Bell

I'm a strength coach. I'm not one of those high-strung celebrity lifestyle coaches who have made their reputations by associating themselves with popular singers or movie stars and then have to spend too much time coaxing their clients into showing up for their workouts. I make motivated individuals stronger and leaner and athletes faster and more powerful. Sometimes I make them bigger, sometimes I make them smaller. Strength training is what I do, and I'm very good at it.

Most individuals, male and female alike, don't want to look as though they spent several months starving in a medieval dungeon, but that's what they'll get if their workouts consist primarily of aerobic exercise and very little weight training. Yes, I know people claim to thrive on long distance running and biking, but the fact is, most athletes like a body that has curves shaped by muscle, not bone.

Too much aerobic exercise over weight training will lead to a high amount of muscle tissue breakdown and strength loss, and as we know today, muscle is a very high entrance policy in the world of athletics.

There are many ways people approach strength and conditioning, but when I ask people what their current fitness program consists of, it's usually the same speech: "Well, I do about 30 to 40 minutes of aerobic exercise, and then I lift weights for about another 20 minutes and go hang out by the pool (*just kidding about the pool thing*).

Now you probably feel that I'm biased about aerobic exercise, and I'm not. But what I want people to understand is that the human body was designed to handle and adapt to all types of environmental conditions, and the same goes for aerobics-only training. If you're one of the many people I'm talking about, then this will come as a shock to you.

After about six to 12 workouts of aerobic exercise, the results you seek are now at a standstill. The only population I feel that would benefit from aerobic exercise would be couch potatoes who never stepped into a gym, and in my opinion they should only perform this after weight training and for about 10 to 15 minutes max.

Depending on this individual's current body fat reading, I would take him/her off aerobic activity and replace it with German body comp and interval training. German body comp training is a method that I use to help individuals build lean muscle tissue and become stronger as well. The interval training program is designed to lean out the hard-to-reach places. For example, women's high fat storage site is usually around the butt and thigh area, and I would use a stationary bike placed on high resistance for about 40 to 50 seconds and then lower the resistance for about two minutes and repeat. For those of you who haven't heard of interval training, the system was designed to improve the speed and power capabilities of endurance athletes in long and short distance sports.

In a future article, I will feature an athlete I trained using the German body comp and interval training system to improve his body composition and strength for beach volleyball and tennis.

Remember, if you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.