



# Health & Fitness

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**Fit For Sisters**  
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Columnist

## Cardio or weight-training for weight loss?

Which is more effective for weight loss — cardio or weight-training? It's an age-old question for exercisers and is under constant scrutiny. Weight-training will help with fat loss because the muscles are more metabolically active. But does cardiovascular training produce better results because of the constant elevated heart rate? As per usual, there are some ambiguities that ought to be discussed.

Cardiovascular training requires the body to begin to use stored energy within the muscles, in the form of glycogen carbohydrate. This energy needs to be restored. The restoration will firstly begin with food. If not enough is supplied, the body will convert

stored fat. Which is how you lose weight.

Now, the benefit of cardiovascular training is that the constant elevated heart rate and energy requirements make this a very efficient machine to burn energy — and subsequently fat — compared to the time spent weightlifting. If you are riding a bike at a moderate level, you hit 5.0 mets, which means five times more energy is used than just sitting on the couch. Over the course of an hour a 150-pound person may burn up to 500 calories.

Weight-training is also a possible way to lose weight — albeit from a different perspective. While weightlifting also burns calories, it is about half of that (2.5 to 5.0 mets) of basic cardiovascular training. The benefit from weight training is that muscle tissue is a big energy consumer. The implication is that if you have more muscle than fat, your body is constantly burning more energy. Your metabolism is higher.

For example, a 180-pound

person who is at 20 percent body fat has a lean weight of 144 percent. A 180 pound person who is 10 percent bodyfat has a lean weight of 162 percent. The difference in metabolism between these two individuals is 1,781 daily calories, vs. 1,957 calories for the more muscular person. This difference of nearly 200 calories in the long run will make a huge difference with weight loss considered.

The difference of 200 calories a day strictly from metabolism can mean that over the course of a month, our hypothetical people will have different weight-loss outcomes. The muscular person will enjoy a greater weight loss of 1.7 pounds due to the amount of extra calories they're burning.

The lesson with both modes of exercise is that they both can elicit the same results through a completely different mechanism. When employed from both ends (cardiovascular activity and muscle-building weight-training) a person stands to gain

the benefit of both.

A good way to train for weight loss is to adopt a circuit style of training using different muscle groups; this will increase heart rate and calorie expenditure throughout the workout while also asking the muscles to adapt and grow to the resistance.

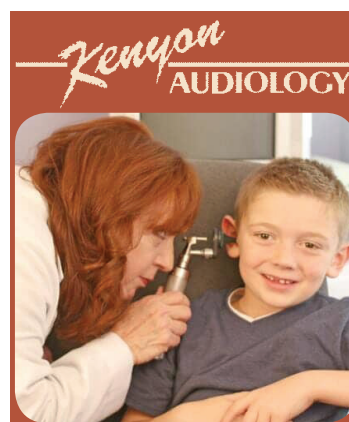
Keep 30-60 seconds rest between each exercise and work upper body and lower body in an alternate fashion. Using three each of upper- and lower-body exercises will provide a robust workout.

For cardiovascular training, 30-60 minutes of continuous activity will produce a good result. Three sessions per week at this level will suffice. The intensity is important. Once breathing becomes audible and heavy, and the heart begins to pump harder and faster, you are likely in the right zone. Over time, this

becomes intuitive.

One thing that's important to anyone reading this is that the best exercise is one that can be done consistently over the long haul. Do you really enjoy lifting weights or does a long run sound better? Consistency is the exerciser's best friend.

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