

## Circuit Training, is it for you?

Resistance training offers many different benefits to the body than cardiovascular exercise. Most individuals look for the benefits of weight loss in addition to muscle gain as key goals in their exercise programs. Traditional resistance training programs do not burn many calories during the session as we spend a majority of the workout resting between sets. Cardiovascular exercise on the other hand does little to stimulate muscle growth. Hence, the question arises as to the training modality that can optimize gains in both areas and the answer lies with circuit training, a modified type of resistance training offering the key benefits from both areas.

### What is circuit training?

Circuit training is a high volume (repetitions), low resistance (weight) workout with short rest intervals and is geared primarily at improving muscle tone and definition, while improving cardiovascular fitness. This workout involves exercising all major muscle groups (stations) in one continuous cycle, alternating between the different areas to allow for muscle recovery and to force your heart to work harder in pumping blood (and oxygen) to these constantly changing areas. Given the nature of your short rest periods, it is strongly recommended you use machines that do not require much time to select your weight (as opposed to free weights) and that the machines are in close proximity to each other.

**General Circuit Layout** - [Learn how to circuit train and call us today! 954.609.4681](tel:954.609.4681)

**Objective:** Muscular endurance, cardiovascular fitness, orientation to weight training

**Duration (weeks):** Varies, traditionally 1-12 weeks

**Frequency (# times/week):** 2-3 times/week

**Intensity:** 40-70% of your maximal effort

**# Repetitions/exercise:** Varies, anywhere from 10-25 reps, depending on time and intensity

**Rest interval duration between stations:** Typically, 15-30 seconds

**# Muscles groups (stations) exercised/cycle:** Anywhere from 6-15 stations

**# Cycles/workout:** Start with 1 cycle, progress to 2-3 depending on available time

Prior to designing your own program, complete a needs assessment and give thought to:

- Your objectives with resistance training (are circuits appropriate for you)
- Are you interested in all over body improvement or specific areas?
- How much time do you have per week to commit to resistance training (circuits are ideal for 2-3 times max, 30-40 minutes)
- Does your facility offer a complete selection of machines that are accessible? You may need to ask or walk around the facility to identify the necessary pieces.

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## Circuit Example

15 reps at each station, 30-second rest intervals between each workstation. Begin with one cycle and progress to 2-3 cycles, as you desire.

**Station 1:** Chest – Any machine

**Station 2:** Leg Squat/Press – Any machine

**Station 3:** Back – Any machine

**Station 4:** Abdominals – Machine, mat or on a stability ball

**Station 5:** Shoulders – Any machine

**Station 6:** Leg Curls – Any machine

**Station 7:** Triceps – Any machine or cable

**Station 8:** Biceps – Any machine, cable or barbell

**Station 9:** Calves – Any machine

**Station 10:** Low Back – Low-back extension bench, mat or stability ball

## Circuit Training Variations

Perhaps you may want to emphasize a specific body part while doing circuits. For example, if you would like to emphasize your shoulders, simply add in additional shoulder exercises at spaced intervals within the cycle (every 3-4 exercises).

Perhaps you may want to emphasize more cardio throughout the circuit. Either adopt shorter rest intervals or include some dynamic activity during the rest interval (e.g., jumping rope or bench stepping during the rest interval).

Circuits are a great way to experience total body training, burn calories and improve aerobic performance. Anyone can benefit from including circuits into their exercise regimen. With circuit training, you are simply limited by your own creativity and imagination. Now, armed with this information, get going with the program—circuit that is.