

# ask Fernando!

By *Fernando Paredes*

*Q. What exactly is core training? I saw a trainer talk about it on TV and it left me a bit confused.*

**A.** I know what you mean. At times, many of the trainers that I see on TV leave me confused too! Here's the problem. The term "core training" has become a hot buzz term and many times it is being used by "experts" that don't fully comprehend it. Let me let you in on a little secret here folks, training the core is much more than just doing crunches and hyperextensions on the ball!

Those exercises only target two muscle groups that comprise the entire core. What about the other twenty-nine plus muscles that makeup this all-important yet often misunderstood core area?

## **CORE TRAINING IS ALL ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Working all twenty-nine plus muscles of the core.
2. Developing balanced strength, stability and coordination within the upper, middle and lower core.
3. Performing core exercises in the proper order: stabilization, deceleration, rotation and flexion.

## **WHICH WILL LEAD TO:**

1. Better communication between your upper and lower body musculature.
2. A stronger mid-section.
3. Better results at reducing your waistline.

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE JUST A FEW OF WHAT REAL CORE EXERCISES SHOULD LOOK LIKE:**

- a. Abdominal and glute "bridges"
- b. Standing cable rotations
- c. Standing medicine ball "ribbons" or sideways "8's"

Hope this helps, and as always, seek the guidance of a qualified fitness professional to learn proper form, technique and program design.



*Q. I keep hearing about interval cardio training. How does it work and is it better than what I do now, which is forty minutes three times a week? My goal is fat loss.*

**A.** If your goal is fat loss, interval cardio training may be the way to go for you at this point. Once your body is better conditioned and can withstand thirty minutes of cardio at sixty percent of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) you should increase the intensity (make it tougher), rather than increasing the time you spend.

## **INTERVAL CARDIO FITS THE BILL. HERE ARE THE FACTS:**

Numerous studies have shown the superior fat-burning and metabolism boosting effects of interval cardio training. You can do LESS of it and experience MORE results. Regular "slow-motion" cardio at fifty to sixty percent of your MHR capacity for a forty to sixty minute session is no match for fat and calorie burning you get from interval cardio that will typically last for only twenty minutes per session. Since interval cardio uses short bursts of increased muscular effort within the cardio session, it sets in motion a series of hormonal changes that will boost your metabolism making your body burn more calories and fat- even for hours after you're done!

## **HERE'S A SAMPLE OF WHAT A BASIC INTERVAL CARDIO PLAN SHOULD LOOK LIKE:**

### **WARM-UP:**

5 minutes

### **\*INTERVAL CYCLE:**

10 - 40 second "burst" at HIGH intensity (75% - 85% MHR)

3 - 6 minutes of "rest" at LOW intensity (50% - 60% MHR)

\*Repeat this cycle 3 - 5 times.

### **COOL-DOWN:**

5 minutes

Depending on your fitness level, this will take between twenty to thirty minutes to complete. Don't get me wrong, low-intensity, long-duration "slow-motion" cardio has its place and is needed at times. For example, slow cardio is good for beginner's programs and even for advanced athletes as a regenerating "active-rest". You just can't get stuck there if you want to keep burning fat!

### ***Q. What should I eat after a workout?***

#### ***How important is it?***

**A.** Yes, it's very important to eat after a workout. If breakfast is the most important meal of the day - and it is - then the post-workout meal is a VERY close second. Your body is starved after a tough workout. An intense workout session leaves your muscles "wrung-out" like a sponge and you set many physiological and hormonal processes going in response to that "stress". This fact alone makes the post-workout meal key in re-fueling the body and enhancing recovery so you can work on your goal of burning fat and/or building muscle.

#### **HERE ARE A COUPLE OF KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. The sixty to ninety minutes after your workout is the most important time of the day to eat. What you feed your body during this "window" is essential for you in achieving your goals. It is during this time that your muscles are primed and ready to "soak-up" anything you feed it. Once it's gone, it's gone- no "do-overs". You have to wait until after your next workout to get into that state again.

2. The post-workout meal should have a little bit of everything. Studies show that just like with breakfast, you want protein, carbohydrates, and fats at this meal. The most important issue here may be in what form you are eating these foods. You want something that will require minimum processing by the body and will get into the muscles quickly.

Enter the protein shake! It is easily digested and quickly gets into the muscles, thus maximizing that all-important post-workout window. Regular food is ok, but it should be your second choice. It will just take too long to digest. Now that you know, make sure you don't miss that protein shake, protein smoothie or whatever floats your boat ever again and, take it within that sixty to ninety minute post workout window.



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