



AEROBIC FITNESS: CROSS-TRAINING BENEFITS AND GUIDELINES

Benefits of Cross-Training

- Helps make exercising more interesting (doing one activity repeatedly can be boring).
- Keeps you from overstressing any one muscle group or joint and helps prevent overuse injuries. Your heart and lungs can benefit equally from a variety of activities.
- Helps you accumulate more total aerobic fitness time. Doing a variety of physical activities can keep you more interested in exercising and can easily add up to more total time. Preventing injury allows you to be active more often, too.

Guidelines for Cross-Training Success

- Plan for a variety of activities.
- Be sure to alternate major muscle groups that will be most stressed. For example, swimming laps generally relies more on arm strength and endurance and causes less stress to the legs. Running relies more on leg strength and endurance and causes much greater stress to the legs, knees, ankles, and feet. Biking works the legs but does not cause the impact stress that running does.
- Exercise for 20 to 60 minutes at each workout, not counting warm-ups and cool-downs of 3 to 5 minutes each, or accumulate 20 to 60 minutes at least 10 minutes at a time during the course of the same day. Count only minutes for which your heart rate and breathing rate are elevated (faster).
- Build up your total aerobic fitness activity time slowly, even when alternating activities, to reduce the risk of injury. Listen to your body. It will tell you whether you're adding aerobic fitness minutes too quickly.
- Follow all other fitness safety rules: Drink plenty of water before, during, and after activity; warm up and cool down appropriately; and wear appropriate safety equipment.