



Six Reasons Why Aerobic Work is Counterproductive

As a Strength & Conditioning Coach and a Personal Trainer for 18 years, I've had the chance to see many fitness enthusiasts workout at different gyms, not only in Aventura, Hallandale Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, Miami Beach, Miami, Coral Gables, Coconut Grove, Ft. Lauderdale and outer lying areas in South Florida, but also in Manhattan, around the US and in many other countries.

At any given gym or fitness center, the one thing that I notice is how you see the same people doing the same workouts month after month, year after year. The amazing thing is that these people continue to look the same, their athleticism is the same or they are actually looking worse aesthetically! This is especially true with individuals that constantly perform continuous aerobic work or, to be more specific, low intensity aerobic conditioning.

What's sad about this is that they feel like they are doing everything that is necessary to get the result they are looking for. They are resigned to the fact that this is how it's going to be and there isn't anything that can be done to correct their deficiencies. If you were to ask them what results they would like to get out of their workout, the number one answer is "losing weight or getting thinner."

When I meet people in the areas where Coro Fitness operates in Aventura, Hallandale Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, Miami Beach, Miami, Coral Gables, Coconut Grove, Ft. Lauderdale and outer lying areas in South Florida and Manhattan and I am asked what it takes to look "fitter," the first question I ask back is: "How long have you been doing your current training program?"

The usual answer I receive is "somewhere between 2 and 12 months." The typical program they follow is a few times a week of bodybuilding routines with weight machines that isolate muscles and 30 – 60 minutes of continuous aerobic work 3 to 5 times per week in a cardio machine, running or biking outdoors, rollerblading or taking some type of group class at the gym.

Specialists tell us that this is not a good approach to take for the person seeking to improve results over time. World renowned strength and fitness guru Charles Poliquin has identified 6 reasons why aerobic training is counterproductive to fat loss and that I always share with the Coro Fitness clients based in Aventura, Hallandale Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, Miami Beach, Miami, Coral Gables, Coconut Grove, Ft. Lauderdale and outer lying areas in South Florida, Manhattan:

(1) Continuous aerobic work plateaus after 8 weeks of training, so anything LONGER is counterproductive.

This is quite an "eye opener" for most people, who immediately recognize that they may have been wasting their time for such an extended period. To quote Charles, "using this principle in preparation for the Olympics, the Canadian Alpine Ski team actually surpassed the Cross-country team on aerobic scores as measured by third party University labs." Who wouldn't want to perform as well as the Canadian Alpine ski team?

(2) Aerobic training worsens power locally and systemically – in other words, it can make you slower.

If you are an athlete or a "weekend warrior" who likes to participate in athletic events or team sports that require speed and jumping ability, this is the last thing you want from a cardiovascular training program. Coach Poliquin adds that "the MORE lower body aerobic work you do, the more your vertical jump worsens. The more upper body aerobic work you do, the more your medicine ball throws worsen."

(3) Aerobic training increases oxidative stress which can accelerate aging.

According to Endocrinologist Dr. Diana Schwarzbein (author of The Schwarzbein Principle II) "oxidation" is a process that forms free radicals in the body. Normally the body can neutralize free radicals with substances known as antioxidants. It is only when there is an excessive build-up of free radicals that the body cannot neutralize all of the free radicals. This leads to changes IN your metabolism which can accelerate aging.

(4) Aerobic training increases adrenal stress which can LEAD you TO OVERWEIGHT and produce other undesirable health consequences.

According to Dr. James Wilson (author of Adrenal Fatigue – The 21st. Century Stress Syndrome) “normally functioning adrenal glands secrete minute, yet precise and balanced, amounts of steroid hormones”. When one does too much continuous aerobic exercise, the adrenal glands are stressed in a way that can upset this delicate balance which could lead to adrenal fatigue. Adrenal fatigue is associated with such symptoms as: tiredness, fearfulness, allergies, frequent influenza, arthritis, anxiety, depression, reduced memory and difficulties in concentrating, insomnia, feeling worn-out, and most importantly - with respect to this article - the inability to lose weight after extensive efforts.”

(5) Aerobic training increases body fat in stressed individuals by contributing additional stress.

If you are already going through a lot of stress in your life, then adding more “stress” by doing too much continuous aerobic work will actually add more body fat, thus making it hard to reach a weight-loss/body fat goal.

(6) Aerobic training worsens testosterone/cortisol ratio which impedes your ability to add fat burning lean muscle.

When the testosterone/cortisol ratio is lowered your ability to add lean muscle tissue, which helps to increase caloric expenditure, is again hampered making weight loss much more difficult. Coach Poliquin notes that “continuous aerobic work is basically exercise induced castration!”

I have given you six reasons why continuous aerobic work is counterproductive to your training. My purpose is to enlighten a population that has been led to believe that there is only one way to train the cardiovascular system.

I provide trainees with an alternative strategy for training the cardiovascular system that is more effective and takes less time to complete.

Comparison between Anaerobic and Aerobic

	Anaerobic	Aerobic
• Increases Power, Speed and Strength	YES	NO
• Improves Cardiovascular Health	YES	YES
• Burns Body Fat	YES	YES
• Burns Muscle	NO	YES
• Aids in ALL Sports	YES	NO
• Develops Aerobic Capacity	YES	YES
• Develops Anaerobic Capacity	YES	NO

The Question of Body Fat

I often ask my clients: "who has less body fat, a Sprinter or a Marathoner?" The answer I receive by all the Coro Fitness clients based in Aventura, Hallandale Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, Miami Beach, Miami, Coral Gables, Coconut Grove, Ft. Lauderdale and outer lying areas in South Florida, Manhattan, is almost always "a Marathoner."

The correct answer, however, is a sprinter! (For 18 years as strength and conditioning coach and trainer, only two people have answered this question correctly!). You can understand now why the general public, who has been told over and over again that in order to burn fat you have to do continuous aerobic work, thinks this way. Sprinters do almost ZERO continuous aerobic work, yet they have less body-fat. How is this possible?

The reason is rooted in the intense nature of their training. The higher the intensity (i.e. "Intensity" is the percentage of the Maximum Heart Rate, not the intensity of effort) the more calories per minute burned during the workout. In addition (and more important), caloric expenditure is increased for 24-48 hours post workout.

The Power of Interval Training

The way for individuals to raise the intensity of their training is to do "Interval Training." Interval Training alternates bouts of high-intensity exercise with that of low to moderate-intensity exercises. Recent studies have shown that Interval Training is more effective for fat loss while improving both Aerobic and Anaerobic fitness.