

Exercise and Its Impact on Metabolism

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If you've been in the fitness world for a reasonable amount of time, chances are you already are aware of the fact that performing exercise on a regular basis is going to have an impact on not only your body weight, but on your metabolic rate, which is what helps to control your bodyweight by regulating the amount of calories you burn each day. What some people are unaware of though is how different activities influence metabolism. Here are some factors to consider.

Aerobic Exercise

This would describe a situation in which you went over to the cardio machines and completed twenty to forty minutes of continuous work at a steady, moderate intensity. This is normally the type of exercise that most people start out with when getting going on an exercise program as it's least demanding on the body and something they can easily understand how to do. Now, this type of exercise will burn a decent amount of calories while doing it (provided there is some degree of intensity), but, it's not going to do a lot in terms of boosting the metabolic rate afterwards. You might see an extra calorie burn of about 20-50 calories in the few hours after the session, but this will be highly dependent on how long you exercised for and the intensity you used.

Anaerobic Exercise

You're now doing training where you will be working at a very high intensity for a short period of time, followed by brief rest intervals. Since the body cannot continue with these types of intensity over the long term, the sessions typically last between twenty and forty minutes. This type of training, particularly when done as running sprints for example, will boost the metabolism a good deal more than the moderate paced training. So now, you're burning the calories while you are doing the session, plus, due to the fact that the body is going to consume a good number of calories after the session recovering, you're also burning more calories at rest later on. Because of this, these types of sessions are commonly thought to be much more productive as far as weight loss or weight maintenance is concerned, which is why many trainers favor them. It should be noted though with this type of training that too much is really going to place a high level of stress on the body, so you need to watch and be sure you are still getting in enough rest during the day.

Weight Training

Weight training is the type of exercise which will typically have the greatest effect on your long term metabolic rate, therefore is the one you should really focus on if you hope to control your bodyweight months down the road. The actual calorie burn during the weight training session itself can vary highly depending on the intensity and the types of exercises you are performing during it, but generally you can expect about five to ten calories per minute. The more important part of the equation though comes with the after calorie burn. First, since weight training itself is an anaerobic activity, you are going to get the increased metabolic rate in the hours after you are finished, particularly if you're training with intensity and not using very long rest periods. This will place that session on a similar scale to that of an interval session in terms of boosting the metabolic rate in the hours afterwards. In addition to that, weight training will help your body generate more lean muscle mass tissue, which then increases your basal metabolic rate 24 hours a day. This is what we really are referring to when we speak about long term weight maintenance and why weight training is so vital. If you are performing a solid weight training program on a regular basis, you're going to build the larger amounts of muscle mass, which is a primary determinant for basal metabolic rate.

Yoga/Meditation Activities

These types of activities have actually been shown to lower the metabolic rate, so as far as helping you lose body fat, they are not exactly ideal. One study in particular found that the BMR of those who were engaged in yoga regularly had a basal metabolic rate that was 13% lower than those who did not practice yoga. Now, that's not to say you should stop doing yoga or meditation if you currently do as they can have very good benefits from a psychological and stress management viewpoint, just that if you are going to do them regularly, you might also want to consider adding in another variety of exercise training to help counterbalance this decrease in basal metabolic rate.

Conclusion

So, if you're looking to optimize your metabolism, be sure you do keep these points in mind. Exercise is definitely a good way to combat weight gain over the long run, so getting on an appropriate program is a very smart move.