



HIIT IT HARD

HOW TO MELT FAT AND OPTIMIZE PERFORMANCE WITH HIIT WORKOUTS



HIIT it Hard Cheat Sheet

In the full book, we looked at numerous different HIIT workouts and discussed a lot of the science and theory behind how they work. Hopefully, it has inspired you to start getting more creative with your workouts and to come up with some really challenging routines that will increase your strength, your fitness and your physique.

But it was a lot to take in all in one go. And with that in mind, this cheat sheet will provide you with a handy recap that you can dip into whenever you need a refresher, a little more inspiration or some new ideas!

The Three Energy Systems

The three energy systems are:

The ATP-CP System: This stands for ‘Adenosine Triphosphate Creatine Phosphate’ system. This is the quickest energy system that the body has access to and it uses up energy stored inside the muscles in its most basic form. It can only last a few seconds, although creatine can enhance this slightly.

The Glycogen Lactic Acid System: This is the second energy system. Once ATP-CP stores have been depleted in the muscle, the body will switch to the glycogen lactic acid system and this will use glycogen in the muscles. This can last for a couple of minutes but causes the build-up of metabolites in the muscle that cause the ‘burn’ sensation we associate with the gym. It also causes the build up of lactic acid in the blood, which makes us feel nauseous and eventually forces us to reduce our activity.

The Aerobic System: The last system that the body switches to is the aerobic system. Here, the heart rate works harder to pump oxygen to the fat stores. These get broken down and useable energy is then carried to the muscles to fuel movement. This can last indefinitely but puts the body in a highly catabolic state that breaks down muscle.

Types of HIIT

Regular HIIT: HIIT stands for ‘High Intensity Interval Training’ and the most basic form of this involves two intervals: a high intensity and low intensity interval. You then train at 90-100% of your maximum capacity for the fast interval and recover at around 70% for the slow interval. A starting ratio might be 30 seconds of high intensity and 2 minutes of low intensity. Eventually, you might end up doing 1 minute of high intensity and 1 minute of low!

Tabata: The tabata protocol is a highly popular HIIT workout that involves going all out for 20 seconds and then resting for 10 seconds. While 20 seconds might not seem like a long time, the short recovery periods mean that this can be absolutely brutal. The sequence is repeated 8 times, meaning that the entire thing lasts only 4 minutes – but is brilliant for burning a lot of fat.

Fartlek: Fartlek is a type of training that translates to ‘time play’. The idea is that you’re performing something akin to HIIT, except that you aren’t switching between two different states but rather multiple states. What’s more, is that you can choose how and when you make the change. You might then decide to walk for a period, jog for a while and then sprint. And you could mix those three states up in any way you choose – even in a non-linear or random fashion.

A great option is to sprint for 30 seconds and then go slower *until* your heart rate reaches a set point again to train your recovery.

MetCon: Speaking of training your recovery, MetCon is an abbreviation of ‘Metabolic Conditioning’ and is a type of training designed to improve your recovery and your energy efficiency. This often takes the form of circuits incorporating CV work and calisthenics. This can be used to tone and build muscle, while at the same time burning a lot of calories and improving fitness.

Advanced Concepts and Strategies

Cardio Acceleration: If you’re feeling absolutely mad and you’re willing to engage in a truly brutal workout, then consider ‘cardio acceleration’. Here, you perform a regular weight lifting workout and use sets and repetitions of exercises. The difference is that you’re not going to take the 1-minute rest in between as usual. Instead, you’ll perform high intensity cardio in between each set. This will diminish your strength slightly but it also improves circulation and ensures that you’re burning a huge number of calories for a resistance workout.

Concurrent Training: This simply means that you’re combining both resistance work (such as weights) and cardio. An example is the kettlebell swing which can be performed for a long sequence but which requires you to move a heavy weight.

Concurrent training burns more calories than regular CV because it makes you use your fast twitch muscle fiber. At the same time, it also lets you increase the challenge for your muscles and stimulate growth. This protects you against the muscle deterioration that can be caused by normal CV and it also makes your body more metabolically active subsequently.

Fasted Cardio: This is a type of cardio that you perform just before you have breakfast. This means that your body is in a fasted state as you won’t have eaten during the night. By morning, you will have low blood sugar and low glycogen stores, meaning that your body has to work extra hard to get the energy it needs from fat. This has been shown to burn a lot more calories than regular exercise, though you should be cautious as it can also burn muscle.

Carb Backloading; Carb backloading is an eating strategy that involves eating right after you have engaged in high intensity exercise. This is a perfect match for your HIIT workouts, because it will allow you to direct the energy you consume to your muscles to restore glycogen stores *instead* of letting it be stored as fat. A lot of modern workout and diet regimes recommend that you only eat carbs after HIIT workouts and this is a very effective way to encourage weight loss. Definitely worth a try!