

Thirty-Six

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO SAY THEY DON'T ENJOY EXERCISE BUT DO IT ANYWAY FOR THEIR HEALTH

Source: Mintel

INCREASE YOUR SMILEAGE

If your motivation is lagging, consider this: Exercisers tend to underestimate how much they'll enjoy a workout, a new Canadian study reports. That's because they focus on a session's beginning, which is often unpleasant, says author Matthew Ruby, M.A. The happiest people in the study scheduled their favorite exercises first. Just keep in mind that starting a workout with exercises that work multiple muscle groups can tire you out, making it harder for you to finish.



ON OUR RADAR

Hoops on the brain

Your weekly pickup game may do more than keep you in shape, a recent Korean study found. Brain scans of basketball players revealed that the striatum, an area thought to process and store muscle memory, was larger in athletes than in nonathletes. Other research has found that basketball players also tend to have larger cerebellums (seen in skilled musicians too).

A SMART TRAINING SHORTCUT

Short of breath? Run harder, but not as far. **High-intensity, low-volume training helps your body use oxygen more efficiently**, say researchers in Norway. Runners who worked at 82 to 92 percent of their heart-rate max for a third of their training time significantly improved speed and running economy in just 10 weeks—improvement that typically can take years. This kind of training adapts your heart and muscles to stress and helps your lungs take in more oxygen, says author Eystein Enoksen, Ph.D. So on a 45-minute outing, run 15 minutes (spread out) in that higher heart-rate zone.

RUNNERS VS. SWIMMERS

By some health measures, runners lead swimmers, according to University of Texas research on recreational athletes.

AVERAGE PULSE PRESSURE

47 mmHg

54 mmHg

Pulse pressure can indicate arterial stiffness; lower is better. Swimming puts demands on the nervous system that may trigger constriction, says study author Hirofumi Tanaka, Ph.D.

RESTING HEART RATE

50 BPM

58 BPM

The heart of a runner (who is upright and fighting gravity) tends to pump out more blood volume than that of a prone swimmer. So a runner's heart doesn't have to beat as fast.

BODY-FAT PERCENTAGE

18%

24%

Cold water may stimulate appetite; "this could prevent body-fat loss," says Tanaka. More body fat may also lead to higher blood pressure and LDL cholesterol in swimmers.

BLOOD-VESSEL DILATION

8.2%

3.8%

Running helps relax the smooth muscles in artery walls so blood can flow more freely. Swimming doesn't have the same effect. Higher body fat may be to blame.

RUN LIKE AN OLD LADY IN DISTANCE RACES, WOMEN AND OLDER FOLKS MAINTAIN THEIR PACE BETTER AND FINISH STRONGER THAN MEN DO, A UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON STUDY FOUND. "MEN, PARTICULARLY YOUNG MEN, TEND TO GO OUT FAST AND BLOW THROUGH THEIR CARB STORES," SAYS STUDY COAUTHOR PAUL VANDERBURGH, ED.D. USE TRAINING RUNS TO GET A FEEL FOR YOUR PLANNED PACE—AND STICK TO IT IN THE RACE. RUNNING WITH A PACE GROUP CAN HELP.