REC TIP OF THE WEEK- January 21, 2013

Cardio Exercise Plan: Tone Arms and Burn Fat

Losing weight and getting a lean, strong body are all benefits of a cardiovascular workout program. According to Dr. Michael W. Smith, Medical Director and Chief Medical editor at WebMD, cardio has many external benefits (flat stomach, toned arms) but even more so, there are many internal benefits to cardio exercises. Some of those benefits include a reduced risk of heart disease and osteoporosis.

Depending on what you want your results to be, determines your cardio workout plan; whether you want to get cut with cardio or burn fat.

Getting Cut With Cardio

Getting cut requires a specific plan of interval training; adding weights to your cardio exercise will give you those toned arms and ripped abs you want.

Plan: During your recovery time, grab some weights (determine the amount you believe you can handle) and do bicep curls or triceps toners; add dedicated weight sessions to your regimen to burn fat and sculpt muscle at the same time.

"Do cardio four days a week for 30 minutes, and add a weight-training workout at least two times a week at 20-minute sessions," says Denise Austin, fitness expert, author of seven books, including Shrink Your Female Fat Zones, and star of 50 fitness videos. "Cardio will burn the fat, and it’s the weight training that gives you the toned sculpted look that will have you bikini ready."

Burn Fat With Cardio

"Running is the best option for calorie burning ..." says Niki Kimbrough, personal fitness expert with Bally Total Fitness. "Whether it’s outside or on a treadmill, it’s the best exercise because you’re burning calories and you’re strengthening your legs and heart -- it’ll get you nice and lean."

A good plan for beginners goes as follows:

**Week #1** - Walk/run - 1 mile a day for 5 days a week  
**Week #2** - Walk/run - 2 miles a day for 5 days a week  
**Week #3** - Non-impact week - bike or swim for 20-30 minutes a day  
**Week #4** - Walk/run - 2 miles a day for 5 days a week  
**Week #5** - Walk/run - 3 miles a day for 4-5 days a week  
**Week #6** - Walk/run - 4 miles a day for 4-5 days a week

*If you have bad knees, use the elliptical machine instead.*
Cardio is not the most desirable workout, but it does give you great results if done properly. Remember to stretch properly afterwards and not to push yourself too hard the first few attempts. Getting in great cardio shape takes time and you have to work your way up to any level you want to be at. Also, remember to vary your workout; location, time, intensity of the workout, and the machines you use!