

Burning FAT vs. Burning CALORIES

Is There A Difference?

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has long advised Americans to do some form of physical activity most days of the week. However, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 40 percent of you still have not raised a hand or a foot to do anything to improve your fitness level during your leisure time. In addition, it remains a fact that over 66 percent of adult Americans are either overweight or obese.

So, what is the problem? With such a large number of people struggling to lose weight and build muscle, the trouble may lie with their ability to burn calories and fat efficiently. With that said, is there a difference between burning fat versus burning calories? Research shows aerobic activity done at a low to moderate intensity actually burns more stored fat, than exercising at a higher intensity. Fat is a slow burning energy source utilized during longer bouts of cardio exercise. People interested in dropping pounds should perform 60 to 90 minutes of cardio, according to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans by the USDA. The amount of fat you burn has little to do with your choice of aerobic exercise, and everything to do with the amount of time you devote to sustainable cardiovascular exercise.

First, you will need to determine your target heart rate. Known as the Karvonen Formula, it provides the baseline of your training zones, which range from 50 percent to 70 percent for fat loss.

The equation:

- ♥ Subtract your age from 220 = Maximum Heart Rate (MHR)
 - ♥ Now, subtract your MHR from your Resting Heart Rate (RHR) = Heart Rate Reserve
 - ♥ Multiply your HRR by 50%, then add RHR = lower training range
 - ♥ Multiply your HRR by 70%, then add RHR = moderate training range
- (Get your RHR by locating your pulse at rest, count the number of times your heart beats during 30 seconds, and multiplying that number by 2)

Although it has been established that exercising at a lower intensity burns more fat calories than carbohydrates, the overall total calories burned is greater at a higher intensity. To burn calories, you will need to exercise harder at a moderate to higher intensity of 75 - 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. According to the Karvonen Formula (above), a greater number of calories are used in 30 minutes than 60 minutes of fat burning. When deciding on methods to burn fat and burn calories, it all starts with you. It depends on your body weight, fitness level, metabolism, muscle development and gender. It is important you realize that there is no secret or magic potion to burning fat and calories.

Of the 1,440 minutes in every day, there is no excuse for not setting aside 30 minutes or an hour daily for a workout. ⁷³

Here is a list of other commonly suggested methods to melt away unwanted calories:

- Eat 5 - 6 smaller meals daily
- Eat fruits, vegetables and lean meats regularly
- Perform aerobic exercise daily
- Perform interval training
- Get plenty of sleep
- Weight train 2 to 3 times a week
- Drink plenty of water