

“If you’re getting bored with your normal strength training routine, or if you’re not getting the results you’re looking for, think about trying **HIT: High Intensity Training**.

As with any form of high intensity exercise, you need to be in good basic health and free from any significant cardiovascular risk factors and muscle/joint problems that could limit your capacity to exercise safely at a high intensity level. If you have any doubts or concerns along these lines, you need to consult your doctor *before* trying any of these techniques. HIT is demanding—both physically and mentally.

General HIT Guidelines

For individuals pursuing modest or general fitness goals, follow these general strategies:

- **Warm up.** Begin each HIT session with a five-minute cardio warm-up, and a brief static stretch for each muscle group that you will work.
- For each exercise in your routine, start with a weight that allows you to reach momentary muscle fatigue in **8 repetitions**, using perfect form and the 6-8 second cadence described above.
- For subsequent workouts, aim to increase the number of repetitions you can do, using the same 6-8 second cadence for each repetition, until you are able to do **15 repetitions** with perfect form (a total of 90-120 seconds of continuous muscle tension for each set).
- Once you can do this reliably, increase the weight you lift by **5-10%** and repeat this process, starting with as many perfect reps as you can do and increasing the reps until you are doing 15 of them.
- Each successive workout should provide at least the same and preferably more **overload** (i.e. more weight, more reps, or more total time under tension) than the previous workout, but only one of these factors should be changed at once.
- In theory, you can achieve the benefits of HIT by performing **one set** of each exercise, as long as you reach momentary muscle fatigue. If you choose to add one or two more sets, perform to fatigue using the same amount of weight for each set. The number of perfect repetitions you can do will likely decline with each set.
- Allowing **90 seconds** to rest between sets is sufficient for beginners, but you can modify this to suit your training goals. Circuit training, for example, will add an aerobic component to your workout, while 5 minutes of rest may be ideal for power lifters using heavier weights.
- Since HIT induces complete muscle fatigue, it is crucial to allow adequate time for recovery and rebuilding of muscle tissues between sessions. At a minimum, you must allow **48 hours** between sessions training the same muscles. For most people, 72 or even 96 hours may produce better results.
- **Cool down** after each workout. Take at least 5-10 minutes for a light aerobic cool down. Finish with another round of static stretches for the muscles you

worked to enhance muscle recovery and reduce the risk of injury.

Although the basic concepts behind the HIT approach are pretty simple, turning them into an effective training program *for you* depends on many individual factors and needs which can't be discussed in a short article like this. Everyone, from marathon runners to competitive power lifters to 58-year-old guys trying to stay in shape, can use HIT to achieve their goals. But you may need to adjust the general approach described above to suit your particular needs. If you're interested in HIT, I highly recommend the book *High Intensity Training*, by John Philbin (2004, published by Human Kinetics)."

Here are some more advanced exercises as provided by Spark People:

Lower Body	Link	Reps	Sets
Dumbbell Squat with Overhead Press	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=35	10-15	2
Lateral Lunges with Dumbbell Curls	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=29	10-15	2
Genie Sit	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=136	10-15	2

Upper Body	Link	Reps	Sets
Advanced Pushups on the Ball	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=179	12-15	2
One-Arm Side Pushups	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=139	12-15	2
Prone Dumbbell Rows on Ball	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=46	12-15	2

Core	Link	Reps	Sets
Jackknife with Ball	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=14	12-15	2
Pendulum	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=144	12-15	2
Seated	http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/exercises.asp?exercise=12	12-15	2

Knee Lifts with Chair	7		
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Or you may substitute with your own TNT. Complete all the exercises listed for a total of 15 points. If you do your own TNT, you can earn 5 points.