



The Cardio-Free Diet

By Jim Karas

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Are you constantly pounding away on the treadmill but never losing a pound? Does every step on the StairMaster become more and more painful? Are you tired of endless workouts that only make you want to eat more?

Cardiovascular workouts do burn a few calories, but far fewer than you think. And the more cardio you do, the hungrier you feel. Not only does cardio fail to help you lose weight, but it kills -- it kills your time, your energy, your joints, and your motivation. You burn a few measly calories but then eat twice as many afterward. The result? Weight gain -- and lots of it.

The Cardio-Free Diet is a revolutionary four-phase program that emphasizes strength training to boost your metabolism; build lean, sexy muscles; and achieve all the same heart-healthy benefits of cardio. With just twenty minutes a day, three days a week, you can look and feel noticeably leaner, stronger, and younger than ever before.

Weight loss expert Jim Karas has shaped the bodies of Diane Sawyer, Paula Zahn, Hugh Jackman, and even Oprah's best pal, Gayle King. With easy-to-follow instructions, Jim shows you how to exercise the right way in order to see incredible results. You won't just lose weight -- you'll sculpt a whole new physique.

Watch the pounds disappear as you prepare delicious dishes such as apple balsamic chicken, Dijon turkey, feta vegetable omelets, and grilled tomato tuna. You can even enjoy a daily glass of wine! With detailed shopping lists, a variety of daily menus, and helpful tips on how to maintain your diet when eating out or ordering in, you'll never have to worry about what to eat.

The Cardio-Free Diet offers maximum results in minimal time -- so break free from the mindless, ineffective cycle of cardio and get the body you've always wanted!

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Named one of the best personal trainers in the country by *Allure* magazine, **Jim Karas** is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Business Plan for the Body* and *Flip the Switch*. He is a graduate of the Wharton School and the founder of Jim Karas Personal Training, LLC, which has trained more than five hundred clients in Chicago and New York.

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Chapter One

Cardio's Reign of Terror

In 1977 Jim Fixx published his first book, The Complete Book of Running. It sold more than a million copies, and at the time it was the bestselling nonfiction book ever published. With that one book, the whole cardio craze was unleashed. Since then, we have heard hundreds, if not thousands, of doctors, exercise physiologists, and fitness experts go on and on about all the benefits of cardiovascular exercise.

In 1981 I was living in London and was about to turn twenty-one. Determined to drop some weight (I just couldn't face that milestone birthday feeling so out of shape), I took up running. I was twenty pounds overweight and trying to quit smoking for the fifty-third time, so I used the running to offset the extra calories I feared I would be consuming when a cigarette wasn't in my mouth. I didn't gain any more weight, but I didn't lose any either. For months I was running every day for an hour to an hour and a half, for a total of about ten hours per week, and didn't lose an ounce. If you eat, eat, eat and run, run, run (or perform any form of cardio) as I did, at the end of the day, you won't lose any weight. Learn from my mistake, and don't blow ten hours a week exercising for nothing.

As running became more popular, high-impact aerobics was also hitting the scene. To relieve some stress and try to get rid of the extra pounds (since the running didn't work), I took up high-impact aerobics, still convinced that cardio was the key to weight loss. One Saturday the teacher did not show up for the eight a.m. high-impact aerobics class. About a hundred of us, mostly overweight regulars, stood around for fifteen minutes until I said, "If someone can find a tape, I'll teach." I had the routine memorized, which is never a good thing (as you will soon learn), so up I went to teach the class. Since the teacher didn't show up for the nine o'clock class either, I taught that one as well.

After that class, the manager of the club approached me and asked if I wanted a job as an instructor. I asked what the offer was and he said, "You get four dollars an hour plus a free membership." So began my career as an aerobics instructor.

From that day on, my doomed relationship with cardio was official. Okay, I want to be honest. I am a recovering cardioholic. I have been "clean" for many, many years, and continue to stay as far away from straight cardio as possible, and I'm in the best shape of my life! But for quite a long period of time, I, too, was adamant that cardio was the key to weight loss. Boy, was I ever wrong.

Here is the rest of my history with cardio, which I refer to as the Karas Cardio Rap Sheet:

- **Low-impact aerobics:** Same concept as high-impact, but less jumping, so it wasn't quite as painful on my body, but I still didn't lose any weight.
- **The Step:** Similar to low-impact, but there was a lot of flailing around like a crazy person and almost tripping and falling as I went up and down, up and down a step.
- **The Slide:** It was sort of fun to slide back and forth on a slick surface. I didn't lose any weight, but I did relive childhood memories of sliding on the ice.
- **Spinning:** Spinning really took the cardio world by storm. To this day, spin class is popular among those who still haven't figured out that all that cardio won't get them the results they are looking for. And for the record, spinning is brutal on your body (more on that in Chapter 3).
- **Tae Bo:** I jumped around and repeatedly popped, or hyperextended, my joints, which can lead to major pain and injury. When you box, you are supposed to hit something, not air.
- **Boot Camp:** Since I wasn't in my early twenties and my daily life didn't resemble a war zone, this wasn't a good fit either, nor should it be for any of you.

I believed, like so many people, that working up a "good sweat" equates to a good, effective workout. Basically: **More Sweat = Better Workout**. This is a common misconception. As with everything else in life, we have to learn to work smarter, not harder, to get ahead.

In the past thirty years since the cardio craze has taken off, do you think Americans, on the whole, have lost weight? In 1987 there were 4.4 million treadmill users. By 2000 that number had exploded to forty million users -- more than a 900 percent increase. Consumers spend more on treadmills than any other home exercise equipment. Since 1980, the number of overweight Americans has doubled. According to Duke University, "Sixty-three percent of U.S. adults were overweight or obese in 2005, compared to 58 percent in 2001." Given that there are three hundred million Americans, that's an additional fifteen million Americans who became overweight or obese in just four years.

How can this keep happening?

It keeps happening because Americans continue to listen to the wrong advice. They want to believe that the answer to their problems is as easy as putting one foot in front of the other, but nothing worth accomplishing is *that* easy.

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Chapter Two

The Body Weight Equation

Some people are shocked to learn that their present body weight is the function of every single calorie they have ever consumed minus every single calorie they have ever expended through metabolism and activity. Your body weight is simply the result of the following equation:

$$\text{Calories In} -- \text{Calories Out} = \text{Body Weight}$$

To be more specific:

$$\text{Calories In (Food)} -- \text{Calories Out (Your Resting Metabolism and Activity)} = \text{Your Present Body}$$

Weight

We all know what food and activity are, but what is resting metabolism? Your resting metabolic rate is the number of calories that your body requires on a daily basis if you stay in bed all day, doing nothing.

Approximately 60 to 70 percent of your daily caloric expenditure goes toward your resting metabolic rate. It includes the functioning of vital organs in your body (such as the heart, lungs, brain, liver, kidneys, and skin), temperature regulation, and -- most important to our discussion -- your muscles.

For years I have heard people say, "I can't lose weight because I have a bad metabolism." But according to Steve Smith, MD, an associate professor of endocrinology at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center of Louisiana State University, "The variation in resting metabolism is likely to be less than 3 percent. If two equally active thirty-eight-year-old women are both five foot five and weigh 130 pounds, one might have a resting metabolic rate of 1,800 calories and the other 1,854 calories." That's a difference of only 54 calories per day, about half of a medium-size apple. Guess what else? The more you weigh, the higher your basal metabolism. The heavier you are, the more your heart, lungs, liver, and so on have to work because of the additional size. So if you are overweight, realize you have a higher metabolism than you would have if you were lighter.

Gary R. Hunter, PhD, director of the exercise physiology lab and professor at the School of Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, says, "Research shows that building and maintaining muscle can speed up metabolism." This research goes on to say that "muscle burns ten to twelve times the calories per pound each day that fat does -- you're boosting your metabolism not just during exercise but all day." If muscle burns ten to twelve times the calories per pound that fat does, and most research shows that fat burns 2 to 3 calories per pound per day, then muscle must burn between 20 and 36 calories per pound per day. Tufts University states that strength training has the potential to increase your metabolism by as much as 15 percent. If you go back to our example of a thirty-eight-year-old woman who is five foot five and 130 pounds and burns 1,800 calories a day resting, that 15 percent increase in her metabolism would translate to 270 extra calories burned (that's ten calories fewer than a full-size Snickers bar) each and every day.

Strength training is the key to weight loss because it is the only way to maintain and build lean muscle, which boosts your metabolism. Most women fear it because of the belief that it will make them big and bulky, but quite the contrary: Strength training will actually make you lean and incredibly sexy. Muscle is natural and aesthetically pleasing to the eye, and it is the key to weight loss. If you have this preconceived notion, then please flip to page 36, where I explain why "getting big" is simply not possible for women and should not be a concern.

In order to lose weight, you need to create a caloric deficit, which means you have to take in fewer calories than your body requires for metabolism and daily activity. Here is an example:

1,200 calories (food) -- 1,700 calories expended(metabolism and activity) = -500

That five-hundred-calorie deficit will force your body to use some of its own stored energy. Another word for stored energy is fat, of which 3,500 calories equals one pound. If you eat 3,500 more calories than your body requires, your body will store those calories as one pound of fat. If you create the caloric deficit of 3,500 calories, you will lose a pound. That's how you lose weight. A lot of other experts would lead you to believe it's more complicated than that, but it's just that simple.

There are four ways to achieve a caloric deficit:

1. **Eat less.**
2. Increase your activity.
3. Elevate your basal metabolic rate.
4. All of the above -- also known as *The Cardio-Free Diet*.

Looks pretty simple, doesn't it? But there is a long-term problem with how we have traditionally addressed the first two ways, and it is the reason Americans haven't been able to keep off the weight -- until now. The only effective solution is number four, The Cardio-Free Diet, because it incorporates all three ways to lose weight. Here is why any ...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wendell Nadeau:

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Paula Mayo:

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