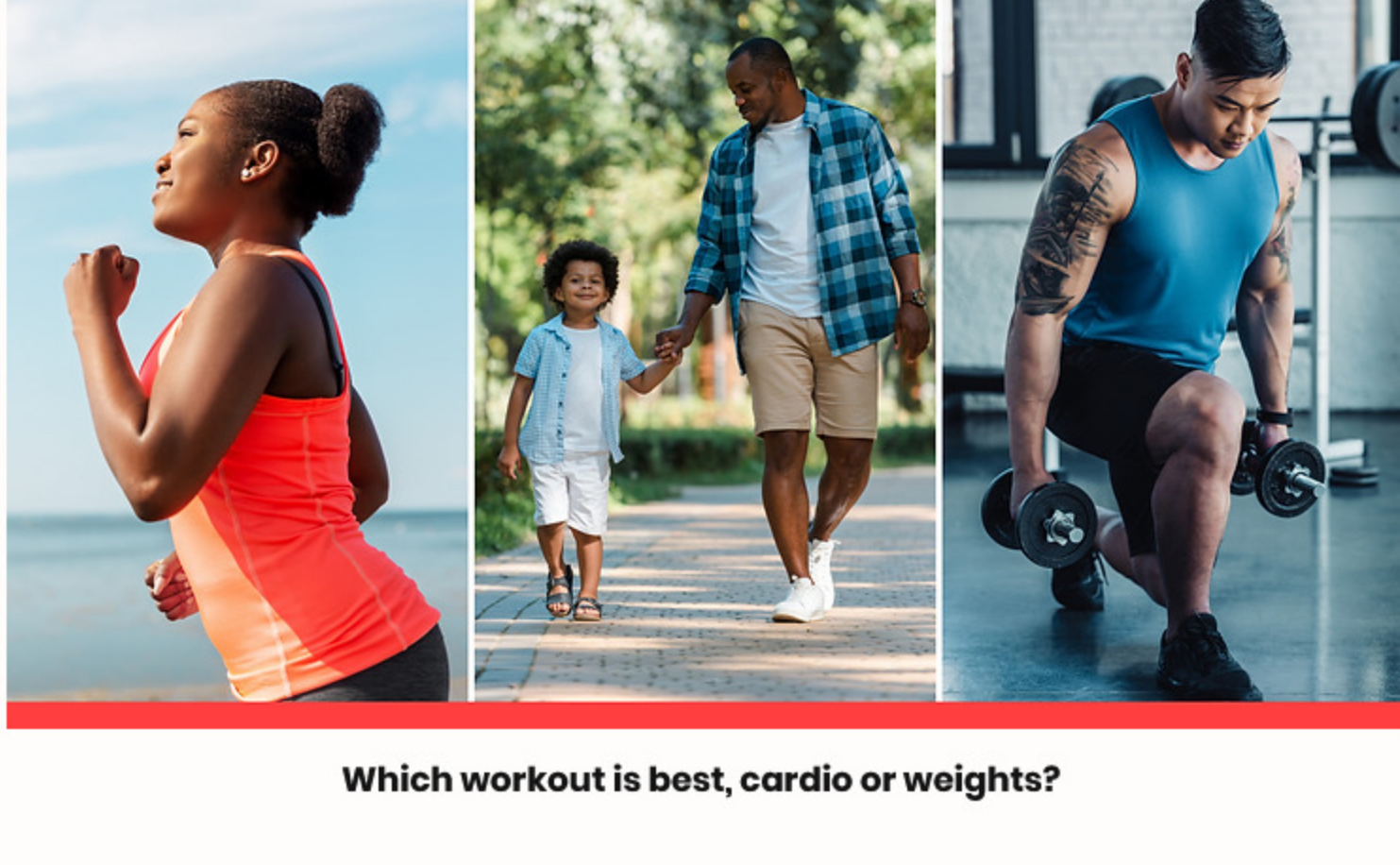


Should I Do Cardio or Lifting for the Best Health and Longevity?

Updated: Jan 29



Which workout is best, cardio or weights?

Both! Cardio and lifting are *crucial* to maintaining our long-term health. This is true even when we prioritize one form of exercise over another depending on specific, short-term goals. For example, cardio can help you lose weight by your wedding because you burn more calories per hour than with weight training.

In the big picture, the question of cardio vs weights can be completely misleading. It can imply that one is a better choice than the other for your health and longevity. It is like the question, which is better, "breathing air or drinking water?" If you're stranded in the desert, you might answer, "water," but in real life, you need both.

Again & again, the question is about you – what is your goal? What do YOU want?

Is your goal to lead a full, active life deep into your lengthy lifespan? [1] Or is it to compete in a power-lifting competition? Perhaps you want to lose a few pounds for your high school reunion?

What's best for you always depends on your goals.*

Research and the thousands of clinical trials all say one thing: consistent exercise in the form of both cardio and weights will unquestionably give you the gift of a much longer and healthier life than someone who is sedentary.

**Please remember: once your doctor has cleared you for exercise, you can get started.*

First – why cardio? What is so magical about it?

Many centuries ago, we flourished as nomadic hunter/gatherers because we were so adept at walking and running. We could jog long distances after our prey or sprint from our predators. We survived because of our aerobic prowess!

What is cardio?

By *cardio*, we mean exercise to strengthen our aerobic capacity and efficiency. This could be walking, running, cycling, or swimming, to name a few. Cardio/aerobic training is categorized into zones of intensity. From Zone 1, an easy stroll, to Zone 5 – maximum sprint.

One of the benefits of cardio or aerobic training is to improve the efficiency by which our *lungs AND muscles* can utilize oxygen. This oxygen is essential to our body's energy production, energy we need to move and live.

Cardio's magic is that it gives us an amazing variety of core health benefits that no drug is capable of. Things like improved cardiovascular health, reduced risk of heart disease, reduced blood pressure, and a strongly diminished likelihood of a host of metabolic disorders like diabetes and high cholesterol. [2]



Cardio training usually comes in two basic forms – Zone 2 and VO2 Max exercise.

ZONE 2 – the foundation of cardio exercise

In this type of cardio exercise, we want to train at a sustained, moderate intensity, like a long, slow run or cycling session. We refer to this level as Zone 2 in this blog.

Zone 2 training is typically a fast walk/jog for 30 minutes or more and is ideally repeated 5-6 days a week. It is moving at a pace where we don't want to have a conversation, but we could talk a little if needed.

Zone 2 training is about *Aerobic Efficiency and Metabolic Flexibility*. The longer, sustainable pace is when the body *uses fat for metabolic fuel*.

VO2 MAX – training for energy – being active in our later years, compared to assisted living

We train at VO2 Max to increase our physical capability so we have the ability to be active now and as we get older. It is also strongly correlated with longevity.

VO2 max training is often done at longer intervals than HIIT, where intervals are measured in seconds. A regular VO2 max workout would be running or pedaling at the maximum pace you can sustain for FOUR minutes, then a recovery phase of jogging or easier pedaling. Repeat this four to six times.

Proper Zone 2 training prepares us to do a fast walk for ten minutes to catch our flight, and VO2 max trains us to run from danger, like a fire. In addition, both give us many incredible health benefits and increased longevity.

Prevent metabolic diseases through Zone 2 cardio training!

The crucial ability to burn fat for fuel only occurs inside our cells. *Metabolic flexibility* – the ability to burn fat AND glucose – is key to preventing metabolic disorders, which often lead to prediabetes and Type 2 diabetes.

When we burn fats as fuel during Zone 2, we also prevent our ingested fats from overflowing into our muscle tissue, liver, heart, and other places, which can result in serious problems.

Metabolic flexibility improves because Zone 2 training strengthens and increases the number of fat-burning organelles within our cells, the mighty mitochondria. These are the *power plants* of every cell in our bodies! It is ONLY here that we turn fats into energy.

Vastly improve your longevity through VO2 max cardio training

The VO2 Max intensity level trains us for peak aerobic/anaerobic performance (running from danger) and improves our ability to create energy for a fun, active lifestyle.

According to **Dr. Peter Attia, Author of *Outlive* and *The Drive* podcast:** *"From a lens of health, the DATA ARE UNAMBIGUOUS – VO2 max is highly correlated with longevity. There are not many variables that are more strongly correlated [with longevity]."* [3]

STRENGTH TRAINING: Get stronger, live longer!

Why Strength Training? Because it is as important as cardio! Maybe more so! Those of us working in health and fitness find that muscle strength is incredibly important. It plays a huge role in our quality of life from the age of 30 on! After 65, the lack of strength can be the difference between being active or using a walker.

Muscle mass *decreases approximately 3-8% per decade after the age of 30*. Bone Mineral Density decreases on a parallel track with muscle decrease. This rate of decline is even higher after the age of 60! [4]

This involuntary loss of muscle mass, bone density, strength, and function is a fundamental contributor to disability in older people.[5]

For those who are NOT lifting, muscle mass decreases, and fat mass increases. Bone density decreases and joint stiffness increases. These shortcomings in health from lack of strength and movement can ALSO lead to possible type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and osteoporosis. [5]

Lack of strength AND bone density can shorten our life after age 65 if we have a fall and a broken hip. Depending on which study you read, a broken hip after 65 can mean death *within the year* of the break for 15-36% of people over 65. [5]

The way to gain strength AND bone density is – Strength Training!

At the top of the list for preserving bone density is heavy load-bearing activity, such as lifting heavy weights, which stimulates bone growth more than impact sports such as running. [6] This is why strength training is crucial during perimenopause and menopause, as women see sharp declines in bone health at that time.

As we lift and build strength, our muscles pull on the bones where they are anchored. This pulling triggers that bone to get stronger, responding to the demand from the muscles.

Strong muscles and bones armor, support, and protect us from injury, disability, and frailty. We need to start building our strength ASAP so we have a reserve in case of an accident, a fall, or a long illness. As we get older, it gets harder – to impossible – to build back muscle lost during a recovery period.

Strength training comes in many forms – from lifting weights, pulling against stretchy exercise bands, using your body weight, isometric, concentric, eccentric muscle contraction, and more!

As we have said previously, from our experience and from watching our clients, we strongly recommend building up to strength training very slowly. We never want to derail our hard-won progress with a senseless injury.



Our secret for feeling good before, during, and after our workouts:

DIALED [IN] Muscle Cream! It gives our clients and fellow athletes remarkable progress in their training, plus the bonus of energy and confidence that keeps us all going!

DIALED [IN] helps us feel *ENERGIZED* and recover quickly without soreness! The gains we make, thanks to our muscle cream, further reinforce our motivation to continue on our path of health and longevity!

Bottom line: you will live a longer, healthier life if you have energy and strength

In study after study, research has shown, for more reasons than we can list here, your overall health span and lifespan will improve drastically from Strength Training and Cardio.

The list of diseases you can avoid, the accidents you can minimize, and the organs you will maintain in great condition, like the brain, heart, and liver, will assist you in getting the maximum joy out of your life.

There is nothing out there, no drug or miracle supplement, that will serve you better than exercise. Both aerobic/cardio for cardiovascular/metabolic health AND strength training for support and protection from life-changing injuries.

First, figure out how much time you can spend, and then do whatever you can.

Your health is an investment more important in many ways than your 401K!

PS: If you want to receive Kirk and Jenny's free coaching/exercise tips, plus find out about special offers, sign up for the DIALED [IN] monthly newsletter:

Sign Up for our monthly Newsletter [HERE](#)

[Peter Douglas Black, IMT, Freelance Writer](#)

footnotes:

- [1. Infographic: Gen Z training trends](#)
- [2. How to incorporate What It Is, Benefits & Examples](#)
- [3. How to incorporate high-intensity training \(Zone 5\) to increase VO2 max and optimize fitness – Peter Attia](#)
- [4. How to Keep Muscles Strong as You Age – Scientific American](#)
- Outlive, p. 254, Dr. Peter Attia
- Outlive, p. 255, Dr. Peter Attia