**How to Incorporate Interval Training to Your Running**

The image most of us have of running involves a person running steadily for about 30 to 40 minutes in one direction, without taking breaks or varying in speed. This is what is known as ‘steady state cardio’ and in fact is only *one* type of running that you have available to you.

While steady state cardio has a ton of benefits for your health, eventually you might find yourself getting to the point where it is time to increase the challenge. This is when you may consider interval training, which opens up a whole new level of difficult and reward.

**What is Interval Training?**

Interval training essentially means that you are alternating between periods of high intensity and intervals of *relative* rest. That means you go all out for a short period and then have a slightly longer period to relax and let yourself regain your breath and composure.

The reason this is beneficial, is that it tests you at your ‘lactate threshold’. This means you are going fast enough that your body can’t keep up with recycling lactate. It’s also known as your anaerobic threshold, because it pushes your body faster than the aerobic system can keep up.

This is great for fitness because it means you’ll be able to improve your ability to produce fast energy in an efficient manner. It’s also great for losing weight, because it means that you’ll be burning a lot of your blood sugar. Then, when you have used up all of that blood sugar, your body will be forced to resort to burning fat in order to provide that same fuel. This means you actually burn more calories throughout the day following intervals!

**How to Start**

So how do you get started? As with running, the key is to introduce this very intensive form of training gradually into your program. Try adding interval training once a week to begin with and for no more than 20 minutes.

During this time, alternate between 30 seconds of sprinting and 2 minutes of recovery. This will send your heartrate through the roof and really test your explosive power and your fast energy systems!

Then, as you get more confident, you can start increasing the challenge by doing these sessions a couple of times a week or straight after other workouts (in which case it’s known as a ‘finisher’).