

Jonathan: Hey, it's Jonathan Bailor. Let's run through Smarter Interval Training. This is a really, really exciting option. Interval training has been studied extensively — extensively — and you've probably heard about it in terms of things like HITT or, excuse me, HIIT, High Intensity Interval Training or HIIT training. Certainly, things like CrossFit and other examples of higher intensity exercise are becoming very, very popular. What gets me really excited about smarter interval training though is two things. One, you can do it in the comfort of your own house and, two, it's incredibly safe.

In the past, if you've heard about high-intensity training, you may have been scared — and rightfully so — because you might think of sprinting up stadium steps or flipping tires, which, if you're a highly trained athlete, might be a good idea, but if you're not, could expose you to injury unnecessarily. But with high-intensity interval training done in a smarter way, like you and I will cover here today, you can ensure safety while activating all of your muscle fibers, getting that clog-clearing hormonal response and getting better results; healing the system in less time than you ever thought possible, not because you're lazy but because the exercise is so effective.

The way we do that is by increasing intensity by increasing resistance rather than increasing speed. I'll often use the example of sprinting versus walking. If you sprint, you can only sprint for, let's say, 10 seconds because you use up your energy quickly whereas, if you walk, you could walk for a long period of time. But sprinting requires moving faster and when you move faster, you expose yourself to injury. So what if we could get the same effect and more of sprinting without increasing our risk of injury? Well, that's exactly what smarter interval training allows us to do.

Now, really quickly, I'm going to show you how to do smarter interval training on a stationary bike — an upright stationary bike — otherwise known sometimes as a spinning bike. This is a perfect piece of equipment to do smarter interval training on because you can easily add resistance and you can add resistance quickly and you can add resistance infinitely because it's mechanical. There's a little mechanical dial here which physically applies pressure to the wheel which is infinite. You could just keep adding resistance and you can add it quickly.

There's a lot of really expensive exercise equipment that doesn't allow you to do that and you don't need it. You just need something very simple and you need something that allows you to add resistance without adding risk. For example, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to do smarter interval training just by running because there's no easy way to add resistance. Even if you run up a hill, there's only so steep you can go so there's not an infinite way to add resistance. Similarly, with jumping rope. You can jump rope faster but, again, there's a limit there and you're increasing intensity by increasing speed rather than increasing resistance. So

really, upright stationary bikes, I found, are the optimal piece of equipment to do this on and, best of all, they're really inexpensive.

This most basic stationary bike – and, remember, basic is better because we want it to be manual or physical rather than digital. This was about 200 dollars on Amazon. When you look at these gym memberships and pill, powders, and potions, and all this nonsense, getting a 200-dollar bike delivered to your house and being able to use that forever, not having to drive back and forth to the gym or all that nonsense is really a great deal. So anyway, I've got my upright stationary bike and you can actually see I didn't attach the seat. You will see why in a moment. It is because we will not be sitting and casually riding the bike.

Smarter interval training — how do we do what is conventionally thought of as a cardiovascular exercise in a smarter fashion to activate all of our muscle fibers? As you know, it's about using more resistance. So what we're going to do is, you would get on the bike, like you normally get on a bike, except what you would normally do is sit down and, according to conventional wisdom, read a magazine while you pedal for an hour and a half. That's not what we're going to do. Or, according to conventional high-intensity interval training, you'd get on the bike and you would just pedal as fast as you possibly can. You're flailing for 30 seconds, you'd stop and you'd rest for 2 minutes, and you'd repeat. We're not going to do that. It's going to be similar to that but much safer.

First thing, of course, you're going to want to get warmed up. Let's just imagine that you're already warmed up. What I'm doing right now is lessening the resistance on the bike. So you're already warmed up. You're noticing I'm standing. I'm standing intentionally because this is the most forceful position I can be in if you're climbing a hill, for example. So what you're going to do for a smarter interval — a regular interval would be you're just going to start pedaling as fast as you possibly can — but again, that's risky. So what I want you to do instead is you're warmed up and then you're going to crank the resistance on the bike as high as it will go till you can barely pedal.

So you're doing this — whew! — and, remember, you're pushing as hard as you can. It's like you're climbing the steepest hill on the Tour de France. You're pedaling, you're pedaling, and then at 30 seconds — so you've got a stopwatch or you're counting or you're looking at a clock — 30 seconds, you're like, Ugh, you can't move the pedal. Then you lower the resistance and you lower the resistance and then you just pedal regularly for 2 minutes or you can even just step off the bike. You'll notice I never have my seat on because you never sit down doing interval training. Then you would just wait for a minute to 2 minutes till you get your breath back because you want to make sure that you can go full-on during that 30 seconds. You get your breath back, you get back up on the bike, and then you go crank the resistance up, crack the resistance up —

How much resistance should you use? Well, you should use as much resistance as 29 seconds, 30 seconds — literally, if I said, “I will give you a million dollars if you can push that pedal down.” You would say, “No million dollars for me unfortunately.” So then you’d stop, you could reduce the resistance if you want, you could get off the bike and walk in place. I personally like the walking in place because it gets me off the bike, gets my mind reset, helps me to get my blood flowing, get my breath back. Then when you get your breath back, you’re back on the bike, 30 seconds.

Remember, the key distinction is standard intervals. Instead of sprint, here it’s kind of like you’re sprinting except you’re cranking the resistance up so high that you can’t move quickly. By using more resistance, you use more muscle fibers and you get better results, which is awesome. So what you’re going to do is five 30-second repetitions. Get warmed up, 30 seconds, rest for a minute or 2 minutes, 30 seconds — so each 30-second burst, for lack of a better term, is a repetition. So you’re going to do five 30-second bursts.

Now, I’m going to warn you — if you’re new to this, if you’re new to this, make sure you’re warm, make sure you’re warm and ease your way into it. This applies to all of our exercises. Ease your way into it. Ease your way into it because, honestly, at the end of 30 seconds, especially at the end of five 30-second bursts, there will be no question in your mind that, “Five 30 seconds. That doesn’t seem like a lot of exercise.” I promise you that if you do this at the proper level of intensity, you will never question if five 30-second intervals is enough or if 2.5 minutes is enough. Rather, your question will be, “How the heck do I walk back to the kitchen?” because your legs are going to be so sore.

This is also a great exercise because it allows you to really easily see how far you can push your body in a safe fashion. We’re all a lot stronger than we’re led to believe and when you do these smarter intervals, you will really be able to see that. Five 30-second intervals. Remember, at 30 seconds, you’re done. Not because you just want to be done but because you literally can’t go anymore. If you can’t make it to 30 seconds, that means you need to lower the resistance. If you can go more than 30 seconds, that means you need to increase the resistance. Ideally, every week, you’re increasing the resistance just a little bit more, just a little bit more, just a little bit more and you’ll get better and better results.