

Weight Lifting for Long-term fat loss

By Amna Al Haddad

Time to beat it!

The scale hasn't moved. You spend over three hours on that cardio machine every week. And you're still not getting the results you want and that sexy sculpted body. The fat is just stuck there. You literally have tried it all. Diets and whatnot –but absolutely nothing came out of it. Well, it's about time you get yourself the body you always wanted. Once and for all.

Weight training vs. cardio

It's has definitely been a battle of the fittest between these two. But who has won the war of *keeping the fat off*? Recent research has shown that weight training is a better approach for long-term fat loss, rather than the old-fashioned way, cardio. Why and how you may ask! A Fitness First instructor in Dubai, Victorina Okumu, said "If you have a lot of muscles in your body, it increases the metabolism and helps you burn fats 24/7." And women who strength train, often burn an extra 100 calories after their workout. Although it's true that you expend more calories during cardio, in the meantime you're losing lean muscle mass, especially with a prolonged cardio session, Okumu added. Basically, you're losing calories only as you move. And that's where weight training comes in. Weight training gives your body a metabolic spike for both a short and long term period of time. Because muscles require more calories to main itself, you burn more overtime. When you replace a pound of fat with muscle, you can burn an extra 35-50 per day without even taking a step to lose fat; Okumu said. So adding 10 pounds of muscle burns between 350-500 calories daily!



A pound of muscle burns between 35-50 more calories per day without taking a step to lose fat, while fat burns 5 calories only!

Start pumping iron for maximum fat loss

Now that you know the benefits of weight training on fat loss, let's take it up a notch with weight lifting types. Okumu recommends that you follow a three full body workout sessions a week. And if you're wondering how to go about these sessions in order to lose fat, you have *two options*: either go for low weights and high reps or go for heavy weights and low reps.

Progressive overload

Ladies, before we get into the two types of weight lifting, you should know that you need to increase your weight load overtime. Okumu said you body needs to adapt to the change. Especially if you haven't tried weight lifting before. Once your body has adapted to lifting a certain amount of weight, you should increase the load in the next session.

Low weight high reps vs. high weight low reps

There are two schools of thought here. Do you want to lose fat alone, or do you want to lose fat and look cut? *Low weights with high reps* will benefit you in terms of fat loss, and minimal muscle gain, but with *high weights low reps*, you will lose fat and gain muscle definition, Okumu said. In an hour session of heavy weight lifting you can burn up to 500-650 calories, she added. Also when you lift moderately heavy weight, your muscles are more likely to break down fibers that stimulate significant growth. Remember, the more muscles you have the more calories you burn. And no, you're not going to look like Arnold!

Don't fool, but fuel

You cannot walk into the gym with flip flops and expect to get a good workout. The same goes with your body. If you don't fuel your body with the right food, it won't grow. That's where the magical "four hour window" period comes:

- 90 minutes before your workout
- 60 minutes during your workout
- 90 minutes after your workout

Pre-workout (90 minutes before)

This is most probably the second important meal of your day after breakfast. The goal of a pre-workout meal that should be consumed between 60-90 minutes before your intense exercise is to prepare your body through the grueling workout you'll be putting it through. It is important that you fuel your body with the right foods for maximum benefits. *Okumu said your source of calories should come from mainly carbs and protein:*

- Grilled chicken with wheat pasta.
- Cereal with low-fat milk.
- Glass of juice.
- Also consuming a protein drink 15 – 30 minutes before the workout.



Post-workout (90 minutes after)

After a weight training session, your muscles break down (catabolism) and attempt in rebuilding (anabolism) themselves in the next 24-48 hours after the workout. Okumu said if they do not have the sufficient nutrients to rebuild themselves and get stronger, your workout has been wasted with no avail. It's *VERY* important to have a quick absorbing protein between 15-30 minutes after a workout. Your best choice is a *Whey Protein* shake. *So an hour later you would still need a proper meal with carbs and your main source is protein. Your options:*

- Whole grain bread, chicken breast with vegetables.
- Grilled/baked chicken with brown rice and pasta.
- Baked potato, low fat cheese and a fruit.



First build your heart with interval cardio training, because your heart is a muscle that needs to be trained as much as the rest of your body.

Cardio Cocktail: HIIT

Now that you know weight lifting has great benefits on your metabolic rate, we're not dismissing cardio altogether. In fact, engaging in an intense cardio workout, such as the High Intensity Interval Training, burns a lot more calories and keep your metabolism up for longer periods of time in just a 20-minutes session. Okumu said it's important to train the heart as much as the rest of your body, because your heart is a muscle, too. A HIIT is alternating between sessions of high intensity followed by a session of low intensity. The best thing about HIIT, you can do it anywhere and using different cardio equipments. Better yet, you don't risk losing muscles as opposed to doing long steady cardio.

Scale up, Fat down

Forget the scale ladies. It doesn't tell you what's really happening inside. You may have gained a pound or two, but your jeans are finally fitting you perfectly. The scale doesn't show your body fat percentage or how much pounds of muscles you have. That's why you shouldn't rely on the numbers, but rely on how you feel and how your clothes fit. Bottom line, ditch the scale!

Keep the Fat off

Keeping the fat off once and for all is always a struggle, and the best way to maintain your new sexy figure is by simply being consistent with your exercise and your eating habits. Ladies, know that once you've built muscles and lost fat, you're more likely to keep the fat off. Muscles burn fats 24/7. Also know that muscles take less space than fat. Therefore, you're more likely to looker leaner. So, the next time you go to the gym, give weights a serious thought, because it might just be the answer that will work wonders for you!

Here's what a typical week's routine should look like:

Day 1: Full body workout with compound exercises, 3 sets with 8-10 reps.

Day 2: HIIT for 20 minutes

Day 3: Full body workout with compound exercises, 3 sets with 8-10 reps.

Day 4: Rest

Day 5: HIIT for 20 minutes

Day 6: Full body workout with compound exercises, 3 sets with 8-10 reps.

Day 7: Rest or brisk walking.