



Weight Training or Cardio Exercise— What Should I Do? *Plus Q&A with Fred Stellabotte on Cardio Exercise—and More!*

—Rachel Straub, MS, CSCS

Both! According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), all healthy adults should regularly engage in cardiovascular, flexibility, neuromuscular (balance and agility), and weight (or resistance) training. To read the specifics, [click here](#).

ACSM cardiovascular exercise recommendations are (a) at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity at least 5 days a week, or (b) at least 20 minutes of high intensity at least 3 days a week. For weight training, ACSM recommends at least 2 days a week. Since we cover weight-training programs in depth in *Weight Training Without Injury: Over 350 Step-by-Step Pictures Including What Not to Do!*, we won't be discussing that in this article. (Please refer to the book for help with weight training scheduling.)

Next ... cardio exercise and a short Q&A with Fred.

Cardio can be tricky and can actually be a major cause of injury.

1. What would you tell someone who does *only* cardio workouts for exercise?

Fred: You need to work with weights, because weight training not only improves muscle mass and strength, but it also tones the muscles so you will look better.

2. What type of cardio exercise do you recommend? Running, walking, biking, elliptical machines ...?

Fred: It doesn't make so much difference what you do or how long you do it. The main thing is you *must* have proper form and technique. If you are causing yourself injury or pain, you need to re-evaluate what you are doing.

Visit our website for information about the book:

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3. **You used to run 5 miles following your weight-training program. What were the specifics? Do you have any regrets?**

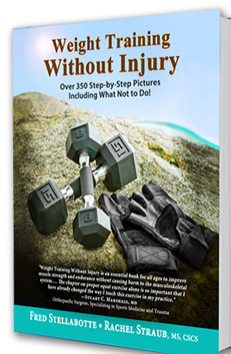
Fred: When I was weight training hard 6 days a week several years ago (1 hour per session), I would run 5 miles afterwards, going backwards the last half mile to target the hamstrings. I have no regrets because I was in the physical condition required to do so. In other words, my running technique was impeccable, so I wasn't hurting my body. Many people, however, do not have the conditioning, stamina, or form to run at all, and when they attempt to do so, they are actually causing themselves more harm than good.

4. **Have you ever completed the Ironman Triathlon?**

Fred: Yes, in 1982. But I hadn't trained for it—I was entered by my students at the last minute. I had selected two women and trained them for one year to compete in the Ironman Triathlon—the epitome of overall fitness events, which consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride, and a 26.2-mile marathon, performed in that order without a break. I trained the women 4 to 6 days a week, 4 to 6 hours a day for a year, combining strength, endurance, and overall stamina building through weight training, running, swimming, and biking. When the women entered the 1982 Ironman, they placed 1st and 2nd out of about 100 competitors. On the day of the competition, the two girls surprised me with a name and entry number. Being a natural competitor, I accepted, despite not having trained for the event, and I finished 10th.

This concludes our segment on cardio exercise. In summary, you should regularly engage in both cardio and weight (or resistance) training exercise. But remember: The exercise will never hurt you—it is improper form that will injure you.

For details on structuring a weight-training program (and much more), please refer to *Weight Training Without Injury: Over 350 Step-by-Step Pictures Including What Not to Do!*, a full-color manual that illustrates incorrect vs. correct technique for trainers, professionals, intermediates, and novices by Fred Stellabotte and Rachel Straub, MS, CSCS.



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