



# PC Conditioning

Personal Training for all Levels

Newsletter

February 2009

"Keep your mind on the things you want and off the things you don't want."  
-Hannah Whitall Smith

Thanks for checking out the February edition of my newsletter. This month, we're going to keep things short and sweet. Most of my work this past month has been spent updating my blog while working on a couple of writing projects that will be announced as 2009 progresses.

Seven words typify my day as I am finishing the edits on this newsletter: I am so sick of this snow! How 'bout a big thumbs up if you're in agreement?!?!



To your health,

-PC

## Exercise Tip of the Month

### “Interval Training”

Attenuating the aging process is a goal many of us shoot for. Sure, people in their 20s and even 30s don't put much thought into it, but I know many in their 40s, 50s, 60s, etc... who exercise to slow physiological aging. Interval Training (IT), when performed correctly, is a great way to increase oxygen demands and slow the aging process. Interestingly enough, IT makes your mitochondria more efficient.



Wait a second, what the heck are mitochondria? Simply put, mitochondria are units of your cells that are responsible for energy production. Adequate interval training facilitates the usage of mitochondria by improving energy production. An applicable analogy is the healing process from a cut/wound. The quicker a wound heals, the greater ability your mitochondria function. In the exercise world, the harder a person exercises, the greater the mitochondrial changes. This leads to a progressive change in biological age as time goes by.

Incorporating IT into your workouts should initially be a manipulation to any major training variable (i.e. speed, resistance, range of motion). Specifically, implementing a system where you alternate your speed at specific time intervals during a cycling workout is a great way to begin. While I much prefer Airdyne bikes (pictured), a spinning bike or stationary bike are acceptable. A basic template would look as follows for a 3-week cycling interval workout:

**Week 1** (cycling MON, WED, FRI): 15 sec. sprint; 45 seconds rest x 8

**Week 2** (cycling MON, WED, FRI): 15 sec. sprint; 45 seconds rest x 9

**Week 3** (cycling MON, WED, FRI): 15 sec. sprint; 45 seconds rest x 10

As you can see from the above, a work:rest ratio of 1:3 is performed with 1 additional sprint done each week. While the goal at first would be to increase the number of times you can perform the above, one thing to think about would be manipulating the work:rest ratio as time goes on. That is, you'd eventually work towards a work:rest ratio of 1:2 if possible.

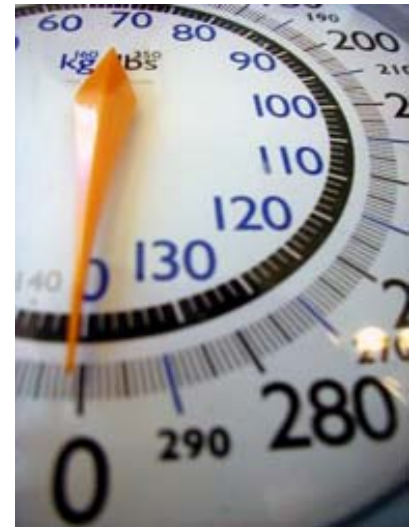
While I am a huge proponent of IT, I do recommend using a heart rate monitor to get an idea where your heart rate falls during the workouts. The aforementioned cycling progression is one where only time is taken into account. The gold standard is to start and stop the intervals when your heart rate reaches a certain level. For example, each interval would begin when your heart rate reaches a certain pulse number rather than starting after a certain amount of time passes. I refer to this as “physiological intervals” rather than “timed intervals.” If a heart rate monitor is not an option, try the basic times intervals for now. In a future edition, I'll discuss more about interval training. Between

then and now, give the IT a try. E-mail me (paulconnolly123@gmail.com) if you have specific questions on program design.

## Nutritional Tip of the Month

### “Fat Loss Webinar”

As I mentioned recently in my blog (<http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com>), I had the opportunity a few weeks back to attend a fat loss webinar. It was put on by a mentor of mine, Boston University Men’s Ice Hockey Strength and Conditioning Coach, Mike Boyle. Coach Boyle had a series of slides where he discussed fat loss both from a nutrition and exercise standpoint. Interestingly enough, it further imprinted on my mind that it is nutrition that is the limiting factor with people. I knew this was where people continued to struggle the most, but this webinar made me realize how much the fat loss struggle is more nutrition than anything.



Of course exercise plays a role, but when you look at the big picture, I’d probably say fat loss and optimizing body composition are roughly 60-70% nutrition based. In other words, you can work out all you want, but if you really want to see improvements, you simply have to eat really well. While this is not shocking news to many of you reading this, I will admit that the longer I am in this field, the more I realize it’s nutrition I need to work more on with my clients. Whether it is my clients or anyone for that matter, I still see too many people working out hard, yet eating like crap.

The funny thing is that nutrition, overall, isn’t even complicated. Notice, I didn’t say it was easy. It definitely is not. It’s certainly challenging not to indulge in convenient foods like pizza, fast food, or whatever your weak spot is. I just think people sometimes need to be walked through the tenets of a sound nutrition plan and additionally what exercise protocols should be followed for adequate fat loss. Here are some of the tips I’ve learned not just from the webinar, but from mentors over the years along with some great literature:

- Vegetables, fruit, lean protein, and fish oil should be consumed regularly
- Strength train regularly as muscle is “metabolically active,” thus expediting weight loss
- Invest in a heart rate monitor to track your interval conditioning
- Steady-state cardio is continuing to be found less effective than interval training

In summary, bring the time of your “cardio” down and the intensity up. Integrate good quality interval conditioning and pair it with challenging strength training total body routines. Consume lean protein, plenty of water, fibrous carbohydrates and good fats.

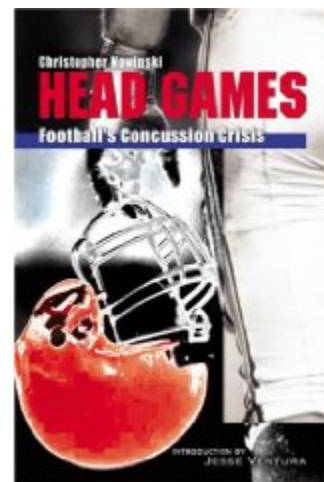
See, it's pretty simple. Challenging, yes, but simple.

## Blog

My blog contains a wide array of information, mainly on health and fitness topics. Truth be told, I tend to post random articles and links that having nothing to do with fitness on there, but people seem to find this the most enjoyable part of my web site. I post entries quite often so **make sure to bookmark the blog under your "favorites" section of your web browser!** The direct link for my updated blog is found here: <http://pcconditioning.blogspot.com>.

## Product Recommendation of the Month

This month, I am recommending a book called "*Head Games: Football's Concussion Crisis from the NFL to Youth Leagues.*" Authored by former Harvard football player Chris Nowinski, this is a must-read to learn more about athletes battling issues with concussions. Former New England Patriot Ted Johnson's story is well known in these parts and he is actually a client of Chris Nowinski. Ironically, I am going to a strength & conditioning seminar in mid February, of which Chris is one of five speakers that day, so it is timely that I read the book and am ready to speak to Chris as a good friend of mine is an acquaintance of Chris. Nowinski also spent some time as a professional wrestler so I am sure the steroid information will be factored into his discussion. The direct link to order "*Head Games*" can be found at the following:



<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1597630136?tag=pccon-20&camp=0&creative=0&linkCode=as1&creativeASIN=1597630136&adid=0V5FKG7H61TE5S3S7EQ0&>

## Articles

Please click the following links to check out the interesting articles I've come across these last few weeks and let me know what you think:

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20090127/SPORTS020504/901270372/-1/ENT06>  
Lift weights if you want to be competitive on the basketball court.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,482825,00.html>  
High school basketball coach in Texas fired after his team defeated their opponent, 100-0.

[http://www.boston.com/sports/basketball/celtics/articles/2008/04/20/routine\\_excellence\\_is\\_all\\_ens\\_secret/](http://www.boston.com/sports/basketball/celtics/articles/2008/04/20/routine_excellence_is_all_ens_secret/)

Article 1 of 2 on my favorite basketball player and his preparation to be the best.

[http://www.boston.com/sports/basketball/celtics/articles/2009/01/26/routine\\_though\\_not\\_com\\_monplace/](http://www.boston.com/sports/basketball/celtics/articles/2009/01/26/routine_though_not_com_monplace/)

Article 2 of 2 on my favorite basketball player and his preparation to be the best.

## Q&A

Topic: "Sweetening up your Greek Yogurt"

Q: Paul, I know you love recommending Greek Yogurt as a healthy snack, but it's too sour for me. Any tips?

-Sara: Waltham, MA

A: I'm constantly looking for healthy snacks to stabilize blood sugar that pack a healthy macro-nutrient punch that I need to stay healthy (lean protein, complex carbs, good fats, etc.). Greek Yogurt is one of my go-to snacks, but its taste is a bit too tart for some. My recommendation would be to add fresh blueberries. This sweetens up the yogurt, while additionally providing a good source of fiber and antioxidants.



\*If you've got a question, feel free to email me at the following: [paulconnolly123@gmail.com](mailto:paulconnolly123@gmail.com). Who knows- you may see your question published in a future newsletter!\*

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### About the Author

Certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association as a personal trainer (NSCA-CPT), Paul possesses a degree in Exercise Science from UMASS-Boston where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Holding a background in anatomy & physiology, human performance, and nutrition, he has been involved in the fitness industry since 2003 and has contributed to local and national media publications as a featured health and wellness columnist. The founder of suburban Boston-based personal training consulting service PC Conditioning (<http://www.pcconditioning.com>), Paul is an advocate of strength training for all ages and enjoys working with fitness enthusiasts of all levels. His diverse clientele includes high school and collegiate athletes, stay-at-home Moms, corporate 9-5ers, brides-to be, and seniors. Paul's passion for fitness has led him to engage his clients in all major components of fitness including cardiovascular conditioning, nutrition, strength training, and flexibility. Adult AED and CPR-certified, Paul is available by appointment only. He can be reached via e-mail at [paul@pcconditioning.com](mailto:paul@pcconditioning.com) or telephone at 617-834-1502.

"Understanding the fundamental concepts of exercise and optimizing daily function are key concepts in the training programs I outline for my clients. Injury prevention, improving self-confidence, and heightening one's knowledge of physical fitness through consistent hard work and dedication are all integral components of the approach I take with my clients. I see many people making similar mistakes in their conditioning programs and I make it a point to correct these areas. I demand 100% effort from my clients and make it a point to consistently educate them about the necessary lifestyle modifications required to achieve their respective goals."

**Important Disclaimer:** The information contained within this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice and is not intended for medical diagnosis or treatment. The intention of this article is for the sole purpose of disseminating fitness information. We recommend that you always request the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider before starting any new fitness program or with any questions you may have regarding your health or any medical condition.