

## Cardiovascular Exercise Article Two

In my last article (which can be viewed at [www.selfhealclinic.co.nz](http://www.selfhealclinic.co.nz)) I wrote on how to work smarter with cardiovascular exercise. In addition to the measures mentioned in that article, there are a few “tweaks ” which can be helpful.

Anything which makes you sweat will lift the basal metabolic rate of the body. The higher the basal metabolic rate, the faster you will burn through calories. Natural substances which do this such as ginger and cayenne pepper and which improve the circulation of blood in the body can make a surprisingly noticeable difference to the efficacy of cardio exercise when taken prior to exercising. Ginger is best used as a tincture taken in water (we have this in the shop), or as a strong unsweetened tea made by grating the fresh root into a cup of boiling water and steeping it for 10-15 minutes before drinking it. The easiest way to use cayenne pepper (which is the better option of the two) is to put drops of Tabasco sauce into a glass of water. Use as many drops as your taste buds will comfortably handle. (If you are on blood thinning medications, please do not use either of these herbs alongside your medication). The advantage of both of these is that they are readily accessible and affordable. Another option often used by body builders because of its efficacy in improving fat burning is levocarnitine or L- carnitine and it is often a component of fat burning supplements. L- carnitine is a particular form of the amino acid carnitine which is used to transport fats through the mitochondrial membranes in the cell where they are burnt for energy. Fatty acids are one of the primary energy sources in the body. In effect, carnitine makes fat more readily available as a fuel source for the cell. It is best taken one hour prior to working out, but is unlikely to have any effect if taken without the exercise being done. Many people who use it find they get hot faster during exercise, and sweat more - two things which tell you the metabolic rate has increased. However, it is important to understand that with this supplement more is not necessarily better. Don't exceed 2000mg daily as excessive amounts can negatively affect other metabolic processes.

The next “ tweak ” is more of a lifestyle option. Stay away from alcohol if you want better results from your cardio-exercise. This is because the main organ involved in fat burning is the liver. The less work the liver has to do processing chemical toxins such as alcohol, the more efficient a job it will do in mobilising fats so they can be burnt for energy. Alcohol is also high in calories and is a ready energy source which will be burnt at the expense of fat.

If you “must” drink coffee, keep it for before your workout and limit it to 1 cup of a good quality brew (not instant). The adrenal-stimulating effect increases the metabolism temporarily and can thus improve fat burning. However, bear in mind that it is an adrenal stimulant and using more than 1 cup per day is not a great idea unless you want to overwork those glands. It is worth understanding that coffee gives a lift because it stimulates a “flight-or-fight response in the adrenals, and it is the resulting rise in adrenaline which provides the lift experienced by many people when they drink it. The more frequently you drink coffee, the more you stimulate the adrenals and the more resources they require to meet the stimulation. As time goes on, those glands can get pretty depleted if the supply of related nutrients isn't adequate.

The minerals zinc, selenium and iodine alongside the B vitamins, vitamin A, the amino acid tyrosine and omega 3 essential fatty acids can also make a difference because of the way they support healthy thyroid function. People with a well-functioning thyroid will have an easier time burning fat for energy than people whose thyroid glands are sluggish, or who have a cellular problem with the thyroid hormone uptake.