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# AEROBICS – *an ebook from xswbhealth.com*

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# Benefits Of Aerobic Exercise

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We are always reminded that exercise could do wonders for the body. Aerobics, a kind of exercise which helps your body use more oxygen while maintaining your target heart range, can definitely help a person live longer and healthier. There are studies showing that 30 minutes of aerobics every day would benefit the body a lot.

Performing regular aerobic exercises would gradually make the heart larger. A bigger and larger heart would be able to provide more oxygenated blood which can be used by the muscles. This could also mean more energy whether for longer or shorter periods of exercise or physical activities.

- Weight loss

Aerobics and any kind of physical activity could surely help control and reduce weight. It is most successful when combined with a healthy diet. Including physical activity and exercise with your daily routine will surely help you achieve better built, healthy lifestyle and increase in energy. Aerobics would help your body burn the calories consumed and prevent them from becoming accumulated fats.

- Stronger resistance against sickness

Aerobics can boost the body's immune system. This would prevent illnesses like colds and flu from happening. It could also help the body manage existing health problems like high blood pressure and blood sugar. Excessive weight and obesity could cause serious health problems like diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Aerobics could help in reducing the risks of these diseases. This kind of exercise could help in clearing the arteries of the heart from bad cholesterol.

- Elderly benefits

Aging could have different effects on the body and exercise could help you deal with these changes. It could help your body become stronger and more mobile when you grow old. Common problems of the elderly would be flexibility and mobility. Aerobics and maintaining other forms of exercise even when older would help reduce these problems.

- Increase in stamina and energy

Contrary to what some people think, aerobics and exercise wouldn't leave you breathless and less energetic. It could boost your stamina and energy. Continuous and regular exercise could result to muscle development and increase in body endurance. Aside from that, aerobics could also reduce fatigue and decrease shortness of breath. Aerobics could help the body achieve better sleep at night, making the person more energetic and fresh the next day.

- Promote better mental health

Exercise does not only calm and help the body, it could also help in boosting a mood of a person. Achieving better health and physical results through aerobics could increase self-esteem and self-confidence. It is even used to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Aerobics have numerous benefits. In fact, some would say that aside from physical and mental benefits, aerobics could also help in improving sexual performance. There are also different types of aerobic exercises which could capture the interest of people with different ages and characteristics.

However, aerobics may not be safe for everybody. Those with certain illnesses and those that are pregnant should take necessary precautions when performing aerobic exercises. Before trying any aerobic routine, it is important to consult with a doctor first especially if you have an existing or past medical condition.

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# Aerobics and Diets

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## Why Choose Aerobic Exercises Over Diets

Many studies say that aerobic exercises are not recommended because these cannot fully pave the way for permanent weight loss and weight control. However, there are studies that also show that aerobics can bring some short-term benefits like being a powerful motivator, not only in losing weight but also in living healthy for good.

While some physicians say that it is okay to diet for a fast weight loss if the person's health wouldn't be compromised or affected, with aerobic exercises, there is no need to worry since the person will more or less dictate the phase of the process.

Weight loss through diet can be effective if it's only used for initial weight loss because this can lead to having balanced diet. But, weight loss through aerobic exercises can ensure that you don't only follow a reasonable eating plan but you also have a regular activity so that you would not regain the weight that you lost.

Although some weight loss strategies are effective, it still doesn't change the fact that engaging into it without preparation is hazardous to health. Unlike when you engage in aerobic exercise where you don't only have the chance to lose weight but you can also improve the conditions of your heart and lungs through the proper utilization of oxygen in the body.

Boosting the potentials of aerobics in controlling weight

But even with aerobic exercise, there are still factors that will keep you from controlling your weight. Two of the reasons why people become obese are emotional eating and their inability to keep doing an activity such as aerobic exercise on a regular basis. Some of the key factors that trigger emotional eating

and the lost of interest in controlling weight include anger, depression, and anxiety that lead to eating more food and being lax when it comes to physical activities.

Experts say that if a person can manage emotional eating by learning to deal with their emotions in a different way, the possibility of achieving weight loss in no time will be greater. Here are some tips in combating emotional eating and the sudden loss of interest in controlling weight:

1. It pays to determine your own mood especially before eating. Doing this will give you a mindset that eating is just an escape so that you can forget whatever is bothering you.
2. Analyze and monitor your emotions daily. Checking your emotional levels daily can help you trace the reasons why you indulge in emotional eating and why you lose the drive to go on with your aerobic exercise. This can also help you fight the urge to overeat when you get emotionally upset.
3. Try to develop new hobbies that will take your mind off from eating food or by being lazy. By keeping yourself busy with other things, you can avoid eating large amount of food on a regular basis.
4. Make simple aerobic exercises such as walking or jogging regularly. Physical exertions can help your body burn unnecessary and unwanted calories. Thus, this can help you control your weight in no time.

## **Weight Control Through Aerobics**

More and more people are now into controlling their weights because of the hazards that obesity brings to their overall health and wellp-being. One of the most common forms of controlling weight these days is the aerobic exercise.

Through the years, aerobic exercises have become one of the most popular means of controlling weight to most overweight people in the world. Although there are seemingly countless testimonies of its

effects, many experts agree that there are also side effects when controlling weight is not administered properly.

Aerobic exercises such as walking, jogging, swimming, and skiing can be considered the easiest ways to do regular exercises every single day. However, people who are controlling weight should also seek professional help in doing this exercise since it may lead to prolonged hunger, depression, reduced sex drive, fatigue, irritability, fainting, sinus problems, muscle loss, rashes, bloodshot eyes, gallbladder diseases, and loose folds of skin. Aside from that, special medical cases also prohibit people from engaging in aerobic exercise especially when it is related to certain medical conditions.

Still, most special diets require some form of exercise. Usually, these diets include, exclude, or regulate a set of certain chemicals especially from the foods that have these chemicals. These diets are given to people that have chronic diseases such as diabetes and other illnesses such as epilepsy, celiac disease, kidney diseases, and also those who are lactose-intolerant. Other specific types of diet to control weight include low-fat diets, low-carbohydrate diet or Atkins Diet, natural diets, vegetarian diet, and very low calorie diet.

## How to complement aerobic exercises

One of the effective means of achieving health and fitness is teaching a person to manage or control his or her weight. This is because a controlled weight simply means that one was able to learn how to eat balanced meals, healthy foods, and have a regular set of exercise needed to stay fit and healthy.

If you are one of those who have decided to use this as a form to lose weight and achieve long term health benefits, the following are some of the ways that one can control his or her weight with the help of aerobic exercises:

- don't rush when eating. Taking your time while eating can help you relish the food's flavors well and also helps your body to adjust to the food eaten. Once the satiety signal is sent to your brain, you can now eat smaller amounts of food.

- eat more at daytime and eat less at nighttime. To achieve optimum health and fitness, it is best if you develop the practice of eating bigger meals daytime to have enough time to burn the whole day. At nighttime, people who are controlling their weight should eat smaller meals at nighttime so you can balance the body's metabolism and burn the unwanted fats and calories.

- load up with lots of fluids, especially water. Dehydration makes a person lose appetite and can make him or her lose so much weight which can be harmful to one's overall health. In order to prevent dehydration especially in doing aerobic exercises, a person is advised to drink lots of fluid, especially water.

## **Effective Weight Tips Along With Aerobics Exercise**

More and more people who want to lose weight are into aerobic exercises because these are not so strenuous for them. Unlike other types of exercise where rigorous activities are needed to be able to achieve a desired weight, aerobics exercises give people an option to lose weight without too much pressure.

Experts say that two of the most crucial factors that affect weight loss are food—or calorie—intake and the frequency of physical activities such as exercise. Although it may seem easy to monitor calorie intake and exercise regularly, it is not always effective especially if the person doing it is not determined and disciplined enough.

For you to achieve your weight loss goals through activities such as aerobics exercises, here are some tips you can do yourself to be able to make exercise more effective:

1. Lose weight gradually. Make sure that you are experiencing gradual weight loss of about 1 to 2 pounds weekly without irritability, fatigue, or weakness. This will allow your body to regain the lost water and fats.

2. Monitor closely what you eat. Choosing the foods you eat from the food pyramid can help you develop a well-balanced diet. You can also check what is the best diet that could go along very well with specific aerobic exercises.

3. Take minimum consumption of calories. Make sure that you know your body's required calorie-intake because cutting too much calories can slow down metabolism. This will also make it difficult for your body to consume the necessary nutrients it needs to performance well.

4. Skipping regular meals are not healthy. Food nourishes the body. Although dieting or cutting down on food intake can help you lose weight, this cannot assure permanent weight loss because you will tend to eat more the next meal.

5. Watch the amount of your food intake. Eating in smaller amounts or food portions will help your cut down on calorie and fat intake.

6. Practice eating bigger meals during daytime and eat smaller meals at nighttime. This will balance your body's metabolism and burn the unwanted fats and calories in your body.

7. Go slowly by taking your time when you eat. If you are not in a hurry, take time to enjoy your food by eating slowly. Aside from relishing the food's flavors, you are also giving your body enough time to adjust to the food eaten. When the satiety signal is sent to the brain, you can eat smaller amounts of food.

8. Drink lots of water to prevent dehydration. Now that you are on the process of losing weight through aerobic exercises, make sure that your body well-dehydrated to avoid dehydration-related problems.

Aerobic exercises do not only help people to lose weight but can also bring about other health benefits such as conditioning the person's heart and lungs since it increases the oxygen that is available to the body. Through this, it can help people to prevent and even cure heart illness by enabling the heart to use oxygen in a more efficient and effective way.

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## The Best Types Of Aerobics

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Since the 80s, aerobics took the world of exercise by storm. Different from high intensity workouts used by professional athletes before, aerobics is a moderate exercise that is effective in improving one's overall fitness.

After being developed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper, regular aerobics exercises and routines had been enhanced and were given innovations since its inception into the mainstream of modern life.

A big part of the appeal of aerobics on almost everybody is the fact that it is simply any moderate physical activity that can be performed continuously for a certain length of time.

This type of exercise works the body at the lower end of the target heart rate area, causing the heart and lungs to adapt and become strong.

Because of this, aerobics is known as the best cardio and weight-loss exercise routine. Most bodybuilders attest that aerobics provide a sustained calorie-burning effect not matched by any exercise.

The best aerobic exercise for burning fat and losing permanent weight will depend, of course, on the individual's fitness level. If one has low fitness levels (most often, people who are just starting out), walking or step aerobics would probably be best.

### Some recommendations

For starters, the best aerobics would include walking, running, jumping rope, ski machines, treadmills, rowers, health riders and more.

If you are just starting out or have not been working out lately, the best starter program is walking. Even if the fat-burning potential in walking is low, this is a great routine for beginners.

In time, on the advice of your trainer and doctor, you can step up your routine. Perhaps, you can later jog and increase the intensity level in your fat-burning.

### Running and cycling

Running or jogging, the logical next level after your walking is rated the best aerobic exercises by many experts. It has a high fat-burning capacity, and if done with consistency, will produce obvious results every practitioner can feel and see for themselves.

One should be on alert, though, on the danger for individuals to over-train. The name of the game is moderation, especially if you have some medical history of cardio-vascular problems. As always, consult your doctor first.

Cycling, either on a stationary bike or a real one, is another fun and excellent aerobics routine. Cross-country or mountain biking not only gives you the exercise benefits you want, but will also get you to see scenic places that can excite the mind.

### Treadmills and weights

In treadmills, you can combine walking, jogging and perform resistance training as well. The possibility of doing high intensity exercise routines in treadmills makes them very effective aids in your fat-burning goals.

This is also true with other exercise gears in the gym like rowing machines. In rowing, the whole body routines can greatly help in burning calories.

On the advice of your trainer, you may add a light weight training session to your aerobics. This might be done at least thrice a week. Weight training with aerobics is a potent combination for burning fat as well as preserving and toning your muscles.

Moderation and consistency

In all of these, the main frame of mind of the exerciser should be consistency. Aerobics needs moderation. Anything more intense is another exercise program.

## Aerobics For Kids

It is important to teach kids early about health and fitness. Involving them in exercise and aerobics would not only help them understand health but also help them direct their energies into movements and practices that would be productive and at the same time, beneficial in the long run.

According to studies, about 25% of children and teens do not have any “vigorous physical activity.” About 14% children and teens report no physical activity like walking or cycling, everyday. This can be one of the reasons why the number of children has doubled since the early 1970s. In 2000, 19% of children, 6 to 11 years old, and 17%, 12 to 19 years old, are considered overweight.

Those who are involved in physical activities, reduce the risks of developing health problems as they grow older. Exercising reduces the risks of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. But making your child follow a 30 minute exercise video is no fun for your kid. There are fitness

centers that have children workout program, they would include biking, swimming, walking, marching, playing games to introduce low, moderate and high impact aerobics and physical activity.

Introducing children and teens to aerobics would help them become more active and at the same time, change their outlook towards the lifestyle they will be having as they grow old. There are also fitness centers which offer exercise programs suitable for children and teens, based on their age, skill and of course, their fitness and personal condition.

There are also CDs and DVDs that mix an aerobic workout with dances and other fun ways. Teens and older children may enjoy dancing to hip-hop and modern dances. Some would also show interest in doing aerobic dances, kickboxing, yoga and Pilates. You could also help your child participate in school-organized sports and activities.

There are guidelines that should be kept in mind when involving your child in physical activity according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1997) and the Council for Physical Education for Children (1998). Children should at least be physically active within 30 to 60 minutes on all or most of the days of the week. Moderate to vigorous activity a day should last for about 10 to 15 minutes. Playing games and activities like biking, walking, running, etc. should also be included in the child's activities.

To encourage physical activity, make sure to implement rules that would lead to healthier lifestyle. This would include setting time for watching television and computer games. Aside from that, make sure that your child would be eating meals not in front of the television or computer. This would promote or give time for parents to talk to children during meals.

The easiest way to teach and encourage children to exercise is to set an example. Obesity and overweight problems are not just children health concerns, alarmingly, a lot of adults also suffer from these health problems. The family exercising together helps the family build stronger and closer relationships. Aerobics would not only benefit your child, but the whole family as well.

## Aerobics During Pregnancy

Everybody can benefit from exercise, even those who are handicapped. The elderly would exhibit health improvements when performing low-impact exercises. Pregnant women would also benefit from low-impact aerobic exercises. Those who practice aerobics while pregnant would experience easier labor and child-birth.

There are also studies that showed women who have been performing aerobic exercises have reduced risk of undergoing caesarean operation/ surgery, quicker recovery whether it is physical or from postpartum depression. These women would also shed pounds gained during pregnancy, faster. Overall, women would testify that they had healthier pregnancy compared with other women.

Exercising while pregnant does not mean that soon-to-be-mothers would carry on the same pace or exercises they were doing prior to pregnancy. Since expecting mothers are practically sustaining two lives in their bodies, they should not be exerting too much in their exercises. Pregnant women are recommended to perform aerobic exercises for not more than 30 minutes. When exercising too much, the body temperature of both mother and child could increase. This could cause problems with the baby, excessive heat during the first trimester could cause birth defects. While later on during second trimester, it could trigger premature birth.

To avoid hyperthermia or excessive heat, exercises can be performed early in the morning when the weather is cooler. Pregnant women should drink plenty of water and avoid exerting too much force or energy, like weightlifting. Places like saunas and steam rooms should be avoided. As all pregnant women know, exercises which would make the abdomen and the stomach vulnerable should be avoided by all means. Jumping movements should also be avoided.

Light weight-lifting can also be practiced by pregnant women. This would be able to prepare them for carrying the baby after birth. Although, experts would always recommend that before proceeding to any kind of aerobic routine or program, doctor's advice is very important. Other forms of exercise which could be carried out during the first trimester would include swimming, walking, and there are special aerobic programs designed for pregnant women. While exercising, it is important to keep eat and keep your body hydrated.

During the second and last trimester, the weight of the baby could have an effect on your movements. Maintaining your balance is hard since the weight could provide stress in your joints. During this time, marching in place could replace your usual exercise routine. Exercises which would require you to bend over, spin and quick turning movements can cause the mother to lose balance and result into injury.

Use caution as you move across the floor. You may want to try a prenatal water aerobics class if one is offered in your community. It offers many of the same benefits as aerobics on land- a workout for your heart and body and the camaraderie of other expectant mothers without the stress on your joints or the risk of injury or a fall.

Even though aerobics has many benefits, doctors may not recommend it to some pregnant moms especially if they show signs of preeclampsia or worsening hypertension. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) also cautions pregnant women against aerobic exercises that would require them to lie on their backs when they're about 20 weeks pregnant. Generally, if a pregnant woman is experiencing unusual symptoms like pain, bleeding, rapid heartbeat or dizziness, exercises should be stopped.



## **Aerobics, Aerobic And Anaerobic Exercises**

Aerobics is basically a form of aerobic exercise with the purpose of improving one's overall fitness that includes muscular strength, flexibility and cardio-vascular health. The development of this particular method of exercise, termed aerobic, was attributed to Dr. Kenneth Cooper and Col. Pauline Potts.

Puzzled by people with excellent muscular strength to perform poorly in such simple physical tasks as walking, running, swimming or bicycling, Dr. Cooper started measuring people's abilities to use oxygen doing these physical activities.

Later, he published a book which provided the exercise methods that became the basis for today's modern aerobics programs.

### **Aerobic exercise**

In a literal sense, "aerobic" means "with oxygen". It is the use of oxygen in the manufacturing of energy as performed by the muscles.

Aerobic exercise is any type of physical exercise performed at moderate levels of intensity for a period of time. In this exercise, oxygen is used to "burn" fats and sugar to produce adenosine triphosphate which is the basic carrier of energy in the cellular level.

In order for fats to burn completely during a physical exercise, it needs oxygen. The moderation required in an aerobic exercise enables the muscle cells to be continuously supplied with enough oxygen.

Examples of aerobic activity would include running long distance at moderate speed. (Sprinting is not an aerobic exercise.) Playing single tennis is considered an aerobic activity because the action is near-continuous. Golf and doubles tennis, however, are not considered aerobic activities because of their more frequent breaks.

### **Aerobics**

Aerobics is the general term used for exercises that combine several elements – aerobic exercise, stretching, and strength training – with the main purpose of increasing one’s personal fitness (flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, and muscular strength).

Popularized by celebrities and celebrity exercise gurus, aerobic exercises are usually performed with music and with a group. Usually, there is an instructor who leads the movements and the cuing of changes in the exercise movements.

Aerobics today has evolved into something that is performed with various routines that include a number of dance-like movements. Also, aerobics classes are now divided into different levels of intensity and complexity.

Gyms and exercise centers offer a wide variety of aerobics classes for everyone. These classes are taught by a certified instructor. Sometimes, they have specialty areas and related levels of instructions.

### **Anaerobic Exercise**

Anaerobic (“without oxygen”) exercise is the opposite of aerobic (“with oxygen”) exercise. Both words, aerobic and anaerobic, refer to energy courses that are used during a physical exercise.

An anaerobic exercise usually pertains to the initial phase of exercise, or any short burst of intense exertion, where the glycogen or sugar is consumed without oxygen.

These exercises are characterized by increased pace or with greater effort. Anaerobic exercises burn more calories requiring a greater demand for oxygen which are not available in adequate quantities for cells to burn fat.

In strenuous anaerobic exercises like sprinting or lifting heavy weights, we develop an “oxygen debt” to the body. The muscles will then switch to burning mainly carbohydrates (up to 95%), a fuel that burns quickly and does not require oxygen.

The anaerobic exercise causes the increase of the body’s metabolic rate. This, in turn, burns fat even if the whole exercise used the body’s carbohydrates.

For today’s busybodies, aerobics can certainly help strengthen your body muscles and that of your heart, tones the body, and helps improve overall blood circulation.

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# Different Types Of Aerobic Exercises

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Aerobics is one of the most popular types of exercises in the market. Its use of music, dance, equipment and other facilities have contributed to its popularity. Aerobic exercises are workouts that intend to increase the heart rate for a period of time. This would cause the body to have higher intake of oxygen which would result into better blood circulation, weight loss, faster calorie and fat burning.

Other physical activities can also be considered as aerobic workouts, like swimming, running, walking, jogging, and cycling. An aerobic exercise would start with a 5 to 10 minutes of warm-up stretching and exercises. After the warming-up, the routine proper would follow, lasting for about 20 to 30 minutes. The last part of the workout will be the cooling-down process.

There are different types of aerobic exercises for different levels of individuals. Skill, health and comfort are things to be considered when choosing what type of aerobic exercise would fit with the individual's needs and abilities. Some of the types are :

- Low-impact aerobics

As the name implies, low-impact exercises don't include activities which could harm the bones and joints like jumping and bouncing. Exercises performed had lower intensity, thus reducing the risks of injuries and leg overuse. In this exercise, one or both feet should always be in contact with the ground.

With low-impact routine, you do not start with a high note. An individual could start performing the exercises on a slower rate and gradually increase its intensity. Low-impact aerobics is ideal for seniors, obese and overweight individuals and of course, pregnant women.

- High impact aerobics

High impact aerobic exercises use different movements. It could include jumping, turning, shuffling, doubling, etc. This kind of workout intends to develop the abdominal area, calf, and also the cardiovascular system. If an individual is agile and active prior to working out, then high-impact aerobics may be the best option. But for beginners, slower and low-impact exercises is recommended first. When the individual is already comfortable with this low-impact level, then it would be safe to proceed with the second level. Keep in mind that doctor's discretion is always important.

- Step Aerobics

Step aerobics uses step benches for working out. This kind of aerobics is actually low in impact. There are studies showing that step aerobics can help a person reduce weight, given the fact that its impact is only half of the impact used when riding a bike at home. Overall, this process or workout is dedicated for the development of the lower body.

- Aerobic kickboxing

It is also called cardio boxing. This is one of the most effective workouts for losing weight. Although, aerobic kickboxing is tiring, its effects on the body are great. It could definitely help in building more energy and longer stamina. It is also called cardio boxing and can burn about 800 calories in an hour.

- Water aerobics

Another low-impact exercise but delivers huge results, whether it is for weight loss or improving over-all health. Water aerobics, according to experts, burns calories faster compared with land-exercises because of the water's resistance.

## **Wading In Water Aerobics**

Physical activities like walking, running, dancing and swimming can be considered aerobics. Aerobics are exercises which increase the heart rate and at the same time pump more oxygen into the blood vessels.

There are different kinds of aerobic exercises which can be defined based on the equipment used in the workout program. Water aerobic workout is an example of an aerobic workout.

Water aerobics or aqua aerobics can also be referred to as waterobics. This kind of workout is usually performed in a swimming pool with waist-deep water. It could be in an indoor or outdoor pool, with water temperature of 82° F to 86° F. Come to think of it, the most common form of waterobics is swimming. Water aerobics would focus on building body strength, flexibility, balance and providing a cardiovascular workout. Its one session usually lasts for about 40 to 50 minutes.

Just like any other aerobic workout, there is a five-minute warm-up and would end with five-minute cool-down. There could be floatation devices provided to the participants if the water is deep. Kickboards and water barbells are also provided to help participants afloat or can be used for exercises. Water weights and floating belts are also used to increase water resistance. Music are used during workout sessions.

When kicking off with waterobics, the most basic thing that you need is your swimsuit. There are some participants who would also use a swimming cap to keep the hair out of the face and special aqua shoes. These special shoes can support you ankles and also prevent your feet from slipping. They would also serve as protection against cuts and scrapes.

There are numerous benefits from including water aerobics in your lifestyle.

- Since water provides buoyancy and support to the body, there are less risks of bone and joint injury, which makes it ideal for seniors who are suffering from arthritis or back pains. Working out in water makes an individual less achy and sore after the workout. Body joints did not have any problem with maximizing its movement.
- Some would say that they experienced faster shaping and toning of muscles when doing water exercises, compared with conducting them on land. Water aerobics could help the muscles develop 12 to 14 times faster than it does when doing in land. Since water has higher density than air, it has higher resistance which is among the reasons for better muscular development and endurance

- The heart works better when doing water aerobics. Compared to activities like running or swimming, the heart rate is maintained at a lower rate.
- This is great for burning calories and losing weight. Walking for instance, when done on land can burn about 135 calories in half an hour. If performed in water, you could burn by as much as 264 calories for the 30-minute session.
- Aqua aerobics are great for those who have arthritis, osteoporosis and pregnant because the workouts are actually gentle enough for joint movements but quick enough to build muscle mass. Still, if a person has the following medical conditions, expert's advise is still important.

Even with all the benefits, water aerobics is still not perfect. Since it would require the use of facilities and equipment, water aerobics exercise tend to be more expensive. Some health insurance providers could provide coverage for the aqua aerobics as long as it is recommended by the attending physician.

## Getting The Kick: Aerobic Kickboxing

There are different types and routines in aerobics. And one of them is aerobic kickboxing. Aerobic kickboxing should not be confused with kickboxing which is a self-defense technique. With aerobic kickboxing, which is also called cardio kickboxing, you could lose about 800 calories within an hour. Aside from losing weight, cardio kickboxing is also great in building lower and upper body strength.

Aerobic kickboxing starts just like any other kind of aerobic exercise, with a five to ten minutes of warm-up. After that, it would be the kicking and punching which would end up with another five minute cool-down. This aerobic exercise combines martial-arts, self-defense, boxing and music. A person who is performing this would be able to learn the basics of these parts. For example, basic boxing stance is taught. Punches like jabs and hooks, kicks like side kicks are taught.

Kickboxing is thought to have originated from Muay Thai. But aside from the Thai boxing influences, aerobic kickboxing also uses karate skills to develop flexibility, strength and endurance in one cardiovascular exercise. Those who practice aerobic kickboxing would also testify that it was able to help them build their self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control and develop a positive attitude towards exercising and work-out.

In addition to that, it can also reduce levels of stress and increase the individual's stamina and energy. Imagine, learning self-defense and keeping your personal fitness in check in an hour or less in a day. But as great as it is, there should be considerations before practicing aerobic kickboxing.

- Your personal level of fitness.

Aerobic kickboxing is a high-impact aerobic routine. Those who are suffering from arthritis, tight hamstrings and inflexible back can have difficulties with this routine. And always consider getting your doctor's advice before proceeding with any kind of exercise program especially if you have an existing medical condition.

- Consider your level of expertise.

If it is your first time to do such workout, then you could always get a beginning class. After being familiar with it, you could start progressing into intermediate and advance levels. If working out with a CD/DVD or tape at home, then pay attention to the instructions and start and do the workout according to your own pace. There are moves like high-kicks which should be avoided by beginners. These moves would require flexibility which would be developed later on when you have already gotten used to the routine.

- Hydrate.

Always drink water before, during and after the workout.

- If the CD or the class runs for more than an hour, you are not obligated to workout for the entire period. An hour of aerobic exercise is enough.
- Wear clothes that would not restrict the flow of movements while exercising. Loose-fitting clothes could be a problem sometimes.

Cardio kickboxing could still put beginners at risk of joint injury. Especially, if they would be extending or using incorrect forms and stances like overextending kicks and locking joints. Wearing weights and holding dumbbells are also not a good idea since they could also be detrimental to your joints. When performing aerobic kickboxing or any kind of aerobics, never give in to peer pressure and excise beyond your limits or fatigue.

Keep in mind that speed, flexibility and your overall performance and fitness will increase along with regular practice.

## **Groovy Exercise: Aerobic Dance**

Aerobic dancing combines exercises and different forms of dances like ballet and jazz into an exercise routine. They are usually considered low-impact exercises and slower paced compared with other aerobic routines, although there are also fast-paced routines. Because of these characteristics, they are very ideal for those who need low-impact routines like the elderly, overweight and those who are pregnant.

What makes aerobic dance an interesting routine is, of course, its music. There are different types of music which can be used for different aerobic dances, there are different speed and style variations of aerobic dances. There are guidelines for aerobic music. It is usually about 120 to 124 beats per minute for step aerobics. For low-impact exercises, it is usually about 136 to 148 beats per minute. Beginners would dance or sweat it out with slower beats.

Aerobic dance could be classified into high-impact exercises, low-impact, step aerobics and water dance aerobics. High impact exercises, as its name implies, would involve intensive exercises which includes jumping actions synchronized with the music. Step aerobics uses the step bench, and the water aerobics is performed in waist-deep water.

Aside from the movements along with the music, aerobic dance is also combined with fast or aerobic breathing. This pumps more oxygen into the blood stream, rejuvenating the body. Aerobic dances are usually done from 20 to 30 minutes, practiced for three times a week. The routine is performed just like rhythmic dances, with counts essential in setting the rhythm.

Before proceeding with the routine, getting warmed-up is important. It would usually last for 10 to 15 minutes. These stretching exercises will lower risks of injury and at the same time prepare the body for any extensive movement. After the routine proper, relaxing or cooling down movements for another 5 to 15 minutes will be performed to help the heart and the muscles relax.

Aerobic dancing has many benefits even though they were done or practiced in a fun way. This kind of aerobic workout is a great way to lose weight and at the same time, tone body muscles. It would also help the body develop strength among bones who carry most the body's weight and also toughen cardiovascular muscles.

Just like other exercises, aerobic dance can increase the circulation of the blood, reduce the levels of blood sugar and cholesterol. Because aerobic dancing would include proper breathing exercises, more oxygen is circulated in the heart, lungs and blood vessels which makes the body to function better, produce higher energy and stamina. Its physical benefits would also include boosting of the immune system, preparing the body against colds, flu, etc.

Aerobic dancing is also a great way to keep stress away. This could break the stressful and monotonous routine we have at home, school or in the work place. It can even allow you to develop or practice your creativity, since you can create your own dance steps or routine. If you cannot leave the house to go to a gym, you could do the aerobic exercises at home, learn the steps and pick your own song. How fun it is to stay healthy with aerobics by swaying your hips!

## Step Aerobics

Aerobics, developed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper in the early seventies, had become one of today's most performed exercises. Aerobics (literally "with oxygen") is basically a form of exercise to improve one's overall fitness in muscular strength, flexibility and cardiovascular health.

One of today's more popular forms of aerobics exercises is called step aerobics, introduced at the start of the 90s. The new form is an innovation of the old aerobics routine, this time having a step (a raised contraption, 6 to 8 inches high) where the aerobics performer will step on or off from time to time.

The stepping rates (it usually starts at 120 per minute) and the height of the steps (6 to 8 inches) are adjusted according to the exerciser's needs and experience. These simple step-up, step-down aerobics are as beneficial as those of more intense movements, but less damaging to the joints.

#### Basic moves

The basic step involves stepping one foot first and then the other on top of the step, and stepping down on the floor using the same sequence of foot movements. There is a general agreement among aerobic enthusiasts that the "right basic" is stepping right foot up, then the left, and then stepping down to the floor with the right then the left foot.

For variations, instructors switch different moves within the sequence, like changing the "right basic" to the "left basic" without in-between moves. Usually, this is done by way of "tapping" the foot instead of shifting weights.

Another form of step is called "tap-free" or smooth step. This is done with the feet always alternating and without the confusing "taps". The "taps" can sometimes make learning difficult for new aerobics students.

The instructor usually plans beforehand when to insert a switching move that maintains the natural rhythm of moves to simulate the natural shifting of weights on both legs like in walking.

From the right basics, the instructor might insert a “knee up” (lifting a knee and during the return, switches the move to the other foot) and continue with the left basics.

### Sets

Usually, a set prepared by the instructor consists of many different moves with different durations. This is executed together by the whole class and usually timed to 32 beats per set. This is done in such a way that the whole set can be switched and repeated in the other leg, mirror-like.

Basic level classes have simpler basic moves. Advanced classes sometimes incorporate dance elements like turns and stomps and whatever is in vogue.

Elements are strung together in two to three routines per class. One learns these routines in class, which will be performed at the end of the class. Most instructors offer several choices for every person’s level of intensity or dance ability during the teaching of the routines.

### Benefits

Step aerobics helps burn calories and maintain weight. The amount of calories that are burned depend on the intensity, speed and the duration of the aerobic exercises.

Step aerobics helps in endurance, prevents cardiovascular diseases, and improves gait and balance. It also provides flexibility training to enhance joints movements.

Finally, step aerobics helps maintain good mental health because the workouts are fun and enjoyable, and sessions certainly release stress. With a group session, a person’s social life is enhanced as well.

## **Aerobic Breathing**

Aerobics is one of the ways to lose weight and reduce risks of sickness and complications as a result of obesity and being overweight. It will also improve overall health. Aerobics could help in pumping more oxygen into the blood vessels, which can increase metabolism and burn more fat and calories. Aerobics literally means oxygen. Aerobic exercises are designed to increase oxygen intake. This practice would burn fat and improve health and fitness.

According to studies, about 300,000 adult deaths in the United States can be attributed to the lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating habits. About two thirds of adults in the U.S. are overweight, while about one-third of the adult population are obese. Adults are not the only ones suffering from weight problems. Children and teens with obesity have increased for the last years because of changes in lifestyle.

Would it be possible then to lose weight just by breathing alone?

Breathing is a crucial aspect in different kinds of exercises. In fact, in yoga, breathing properly is important. Breathing exercises could even remove stress and relax the body and mind. Breathing for weight loss is practiced by several aerobic breathing programs. Each program would have their own technique and their own advice.

However, it is important to understand that there is no weight loss program or pill that could produce dramatic results overnight. Obesity and being overweight cannot be resolved by aerobic breathing alone. Of course, proper diet and exercise is still crucial to battle the pounds away. Aerobic breathing can supplement these weight loss programs to acquire better results.

Most of us would only use about 20% of our lung capacity, while 70% of toxic elimination in our body happens when we breathe. Aerobic breathing helps our body maximize its potential. By breathing properly for about 20 minutes a day, you can bring drastic results in your health.

The guiding principle is that breathing can cleanse your body. It could help in flushing out waste, toxins and other pollutants from your body. Diaphragmatic deep breathing techniques could help in reducing cellulite, improve skin tone, blood circulation, digestion and even sleep.

With aerobic breathing, all you have to do is sit up straight, exhale from the lungs and inhale through the nose. Breathing should be able to stretch the lungs to its capacity. When exhaling, make sure to force out all the air in the lungs. Hold breathing for a while and then pull your stomach in. You can do these breathing exercises about 10 to 20 times. Some would prefer doing them before proceeding with any exercise training.

Everyone wants to lose weight. But it does not mean that you should start starving yourself and become a slave to exercise machines. In the end, losing weight would still mean eating fruits, vegetables and healthy food, exercising regularly and staying or maintaining a positive outlook of life.

Whenever we are including ourselves in aerobics and weight loss programs, setting realistic goals for us to accomplish would make it easier for us and at the same time, take weight loss according to our own phase. Breathing may not be the magic beans we're looking for to look good, but it can definitely help us change into a new person.

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# The Benefits Of Aerobics – a summing up

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## Primary benefits

Most aerobic exercises are geared towards making the heart pump faster than it ordinarily does, and makes your breathing faster and quicker. Working the heart this way makes it stronger and more efficient in helping the circulation in the body.

Because of efficient circulation, the mood of the person doing the exercise becomes elevated, and the energy level increases.

Inside the body, the number of red blood cells also increases. This, in turn, helps in making the system more efficient in transporting oxygen all over the body.

Aside from a healthy heart and an efficient circulation system in action, the body benefits greatly because of increased oxygen delivered by the blood to all parts. After a while, the muscles become trained for endurance as well.

In turn, this strengthens the muscles, especially those related to respiration including the flow of air in and out of the lungs. Overall, the body's muscles become toned which again helps improve circulation and reduce high blood pressure.

In high-impact aerobics (which includes jogging or jumping rope), bone growth is stimulated. This helps in reducing osteoporosis risk in men and women alike.

## Other benefits

Consequently, because of aerobics, there are many beneficial decreases that happen in the body. First, there is a measurable decrease (and sometimes the disappearance) of the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

In this world where almost everything moves in a fast-paced environment, people no longer pay attention to “slowly-but-surely” strategies. Everybody wants everything in express- fast, easy, hassle-free, and convenient. Even in losing weight, people who are suffering from obesity want fast weight loss solutions to their problem. That’s why they indulge in aerobic exercises.

## **And P.S.**

### **Tips on The road to successful weight loss**

Experts say that the primary key to any successful weight loss is the discipline of the person to follow the necessary requirements religiously for the weight loss program. Of course, the knowledge on the best type of losing weight that would work on THEM is also a plus factor.

What you can do

Experts say that activities such as aerobics exercises are good ways to jumpstart a weight loss program, but it’s significant to keep the long term weight loss goals. There’s really no such thing as a "quick fix" or "instant" when it comes to weight loss and you must bear in mind that if you want to be happy, healthy, and achieve your desired weight for good, you better start changing your eating and lifestyle habits.

- exert more effort to form closer friendships and emotional bonds since having a company that can give you moral support in your endeavor will help you fight emotional complexities;

- discover and practice a better spiritual health since analyzing your emotions through spiritual health can be enough motivation to keep up with your weight loss agenda;

- stick to water therapy because drinking at least 8 glasses of water daily can keep your body refreshed and well hydrated so you won't easily get irritated or upset;

- choose your guilty pleasures because comfort foods such as junk foods should be replaced with healthier alternatives such as fruits or low fat products; and

- learn to forgive yourself when you blow and you don't get the result you want after any aerobic exercise because feeling guilty and depressed will only make matters worst.

And whatever you do if you are not enjoying the process, the journey – find a way that works for you that you enjoy



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*Till next time...*