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# F.I.T.T. PRINCIPLE

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## FREQUENCY | INTENSITY | TYPE | TIME

The F.I.T.T. Principle is one of the foundations of exercise, a set of guidelines that help you set up a workout routine to fit your goals and fitness level while helping you get the most out of your exercise.

### Frequency: How often you exercise.

- **For Cardio Exercise:** Exercise Guidelines suggest moderate exercise five or more days a week or intense cardio three days a week to improve your health. For weight loss, you may need to do up to six or more days a week.
- **For Strength Training:** The recommended frequency here is 2-3 non-consecutive days a week (at least 1-2 days between sessions).
- **For Flexibility Training:** 2-3 days a week

### Intensity: How hard you work during exercise

- **For Cardio Exercise:** The general rule is to work in your target heart rate zone and focus on a variety of intensities to stimulate different energy systems.
- **For Strength Training:** The exercises you do (at least 8-10 exercises), the amount of weight you lift and your reps and sets determine the intensity of your strength workouts. In general, you want to lift enough weight that you can only complete the desired number of reps (around 1-3 sets of 8-16 reps of each exercise).
- **For Flexibility:** You should feel tightness and slight discomfort, but no pain. The stretch should NOT be unbearable, and you should be able to hold it for 10-30 seconds (static), no matter how deep into the stretch you are.

### Time: How long you exercise

- **For Cardio Exercise:** The exercise guidelines suggest 30-60 minutes of cardio (or working your way up to that). How long you exercise will not just be dependent on your fitness level, but also your intensity. The harder you work, the shorter your workouts will be.
- **For Strength Training:** How long you lift weights depends on the type of workout you're doing and your schedule. For example, a total body workout could take up to an hour, whereas a split routine could take less time.
- **For Flexibility** 10-30 seconds per stretch, done in a cycle so each stretch is performed 2-4 times. In the end, each stretch should be done for a TOTAL of 60 seconds. For example, you can touch your toes for

20 seconds, do a butterfly stretch for 20 seconds, then a cobra pose for 20 seconds. Repeating this cycle three times will give you a minute of each pose.

## **Type: The type of activity you're doing**

- **For Cardio Exercise:** Any activity that gets your heart rate up counts as cardio - Running, walking, cycling, dancing, sports, etc.
- **For Strength Training:** This pretty much includes any exercise where you're using some type of resistance (bands, dumbbells, machines, etc.) to work your muscles. Bodyweight exercises can also be considered a form of strength training, as well, although building strength will likely require more resistance.
- **For Flexibility Training:** Stretches can be static or dynamic. Static stretches are “normal” stretches, where you hold a pose. Dynamic stretches involve moving, such as twisting your upper body, swinging your arms, kicking your legs out to stretch your hip flexors, etc.

**The F.I.T.T. Principle is important because it outlines how to manipulate your program to get in shape and get better results. It also helps you figure out how to change your workouts to avoid boredom, overuse injuries and weight loss plateaus.**

**For example, walking three times a week for 30 minutes at a moderate pace might be a great place for a beginner to start.**

After a few weeks, however, your body adapts to these workouts and several things may happen:

- **Your body becomes more efficient at exercise** - The more you work out, the easier it is to do the exercises, causing you to burn fewer calories than you did when you started.
- **Weight loss** - Your new workouts may cause weight loss which, of course, is a good thing. The downside? You expend fewer calories moving that new, smaller body around.
- **Boredom** - Doing the same workout for weeks or months on end can get old, eating into your motivation to exercise.

It's at this point you want to manipulate one or more of the F.I.T.T. Principles such as adding another day of walking (changing your exercise Frequency), walking faster or add some running (changing the Intensity), walking for a longer period of time (changing the Time) or trying something different like swimming or running (changing the Type).

Questions:

1. List and define each letter of the F.I.T.T Principle

**F:**

**I:**

**T:**

**T:**

2. What are the general guidelines for FREQUENCY of exercise?

Cardio:

Strength Training:

Flexibility Training:

3. What are the general guidelines for INTENSITY of exercise?

Cardio:

Strength Training:

Flexibility Training:

4. What are the guidelines recommended for TIME?

Cardio:

Strength Training:

Flexibility Training:

5. List 3 TYPES of exercises that can be done for a cardiovascular workout and 3 TYPES of exercises that can be done for a strength workout.

6. Give an example of how you can manipulate the INTENSITY of your workout.

7. Give an example of how you can manipulate the TYPE of exercise you do.

8. Give an example of how you can manipulate the FREQUENCY at which you work out.