

Cross Training

What is cross training?

Cross training involves different types of exercise that are done in the same workout or in separate workouts on a regular schedule. For example, you might run and lift weights one day and swim the next. Because different exercises target different parts of the body, cross training gives you the benefits of many types of exercise.

What are the benefits of cross training?

- **You can get a total body workout.** The different exercises can condition your entire body. For example, running strengthens your legs while swimming works more on your upper body.
- **It can help you lose weight.** Doing the same exercise all the time makes your body more efficient, which means that it burns fewer calories. Changing the exercises you do helps you burn more calories.
- **It helps prevent overuse injuries.** Because you are not doing the same exercise all of the time, you can limit stress on specific joints or muscles and prevent muscle imbalances.
- **You can still get exercise even if you have an injury.** For example, if you have a knee injury, you can still get exercise by doing an activity that does not stress your knee, such as swimming. This lets you keep exercising while your injury heals.
- **You are less likely to get bored with your training routine.** Including a variety of exercises in a workout routine can be a great way to improve total body strength, endurance, and flexibility.

How do I get started?

Before beginning any exercise program, it is always a good idea to check first with your healthcare provider. To get the most out of a cross-training routine, choose at least one activity from each of the 3 different exercise groups listed below. You might want to start with exercises that you know you like.

- **Flexibility exercises**
 - Yoga
 - Pilates
 - Stretching
- **Strength-training exercises**
 - Free weights
 - Machines
 - Calisthenics (push-ups, chin-ups, jumping jacks, etc.)
- **Cardiovascular endurance exercises**
 - Walking

- Jogging
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Tennis
- Cross-country skiing
- Rowing
- Skating
- Elliptical trainer
- Aerobic fitness classes

Flexibility exercises are usually done for 10 to 60 minutes, while strength and cardiovascular exercises are usually done for 30 to 60 minutes.

What would a sample cross-training program look like?

Here is an example of a cross-training program designed for overall fitness.

Day of the week	Activity	Duration
Sunday	jogging stretching	20 to 30 min 10 min
Monday	cycling weight training	30 min 30 min
Tuesday	jogging stretching	20 to 30 min 10 min
Wednesday	rest day	
Thursday	swimming weight training	30 min 30 min
Friday	jogging yoga	20 to 30 min 30 to 50 min
Saturday	cycling	30 min

Are there any cautions I should follow?

- When you add a new activity, don't do it for more than 20 minutes the first several times. This helps lower your risk of injury.
- Listen to your body. If you have soreness or pain, take a rest day or try a different exercise that does not stress that area.
- Don't overdo it. Avoid adding new exercises to an already heavy routine. If you are running 6 days a week, don't add swimming on the 7th day. Instead, use swimming to replace running one or two days per week.

- Avoid activities that stress the same body part. For example, if you have foot pain, jogging, tennis, and hiking might make it worse. Substitute an exercise such as swimming or cycling for one of these activities.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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