

# Cardiovascular Training

The training you don't have time not to do!

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## PART TWO – Cardiovascular Conditioning – Practical Ideas: Stair Climbing

### Why Stair Climb?

Availability	stairs are everywhere – indoor and outdoor – in town and out of town! = FREQUENCY
Ease	activities can be easily modified to increase / decrease INTENSITY
Convenience	no schedule restrictions – your time is your TIME
Options	no limit to creativity / exercise variables = TYPE
Effective	high calorie burn / great cardio response

SAMPLE PROTOCOL	
<b>Date range</b>	Recommended 3 weeks
<b>Warm-up</b>	7 minutes Walk up and down the stairs x 1 sets Stretch gastroc, soleus, quads, psoas, hamstrings, gluts Heel / toe rocks x 12
<b>Cardio</b>	7 minute interval circuits (choose to do 1, 2, 3 or 4 sets, up the stairs 2 at a time, down 1 step at a time) Walk up the stairs x 1 set (heart rate check) Side to side (facing forward) up the stairs x 1 set Crossover step up the stairs x 1 set
<b>Variations for increased challenge</b>	Decrease number of floors Rest / stretch between floors Walk along any floor and down other staircase
<b>Variations for decreased challenge</b>	Do a set / each set in less time Set 1 = 3:30 minutes Set 2 = 3:00 minutes Set 3 = 2:45 minutes
<b>Cool-down</b>	Walk around Mona Campbell Square x 2 Stretch thoroughly!

### Warm up

Warm-up is an essential aspect to the success of any conditioning program. A warm-up should be a deliberate inclusion of every training session and is intended to aid the body to prepare both physiologically and psychologically for physical performance. By warming up prior to every training session, performance is improved, and the possibility of injury is significantly decreased.

Warm-up is important as it increases the body temperature which results in improved performance by:

- increasing the contractile force and contractile speed of muscle
- increasing muscle efficiency due to decreased viscosity
- increasing the removal of lactic acid and waste product accumulation
- improving coordination through specific activity

- preparing for training by being stimulated mentally and physically

Warm-up also has the effect of increasing heart and respiration rates which results in improved performance by:

- increasing blood flow / circulation which increases the supply of oxygen and the flow of nutrients

### Cool down

Cool-down is an equally important aspect to the success of any conditioning program as warm-up. In fact, some (including me) believe it to be more important. A cool-down should be a deliberate inclusion of every training session and is intended to aid the body to pre exercise status post exertion. By performing a cool-down following every training session, performance is improved, and the possibility of injury is significantly decreased. The easiest thing to do is to perform the warm-up in reverse! And remember to stretch, stretch, stretch!

### Climbing

Stair climbing is inherently challenging – as we all know from the increased breathing and heart rate upon ascent. Climbing can be more challenging (increased intensity) by climbing up 2 stairs at a time. Establish a good pace and maintain technique while ascending flights. Since the descent is more demanding on the joints (knees), it is recommended that you come down 1 stair at a time.

### Progression

It is very important to accurately assess your current level of conditioning and to be logical and systematic in your progression. Injury prevention is a goal of participation. Appropriate increase of activity is essential to achieve that goal. Be sure that you can sing your way through an ascent before increasing the challenge. Singing ensures that you are breathing properly and maintaining an appropriate heart rate / intensity level. Fatigue can be measured a variety of ways including:

- failure to maintain pace
- failure to maintain technique
- wobbly / shaking legs
- feeling lightheaded

At the onset of fatigue, slow down, walk the landing and drink water for an active recovery. It is a totally acceptable workout to select one ascending activity and repeat it. For example, climb 2 stairs at a time. Over the course of training, you will increase your muscular and cardiovascular endurance.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES		
Challenging	More Challenging	Greatest Challenge
up 2 stairs at a time	run up (1/2 speed)	run (full speed)
side to side step up (wide legs, step together)	2 steps up, same leg lead	run up (1/2 speed), hands on shoulders
crossover step up	walk up, hands behind head	jump up
zig zag / bear walk (wide legs, stay wide)	walk down sideways, crossover (step behind)	single leg hop
walk down backwards	side gallops down the stairs	side gallops up the stairs

## **Tips**

- wear appropriate clothing and foot wear
- drink water before, during and after your climb
- be body-aware
- place your whole foot on the step
- pay attention to knee placement
- ensure shin is perpendicular to floor
- monitor fatigue and modify accordingly
- pump arms to work for and with you
- be security conscious – let someone know where you are going
- do not get discouraged – stair climbing is very challenging – pace yourself
- keep a training log – you will amaze yourself with your progress!

## **What should I do everyday for my heart?**

- Laugh heartily!
- Give countless heartfelt hugs!
- Love someone, something, everyone, everything!

## **In the next issue:**

PART THREE – Cardiovascular Conditioning – Practical Ideas: Water / Pool Activities