

## Aerobic Exercise Variations

Getting fit and having fun don't always go hand in hand. The phrase "sustained physical activity" certainly doesn't sound like a great time; but call it "aerobics" and it suddenly seems a lot more enjoyable.

By definition, aerobic exercise is a "sustained physical activity that helps build endurance, burn fat and condition the cardiovascular system". Aerobics exercises come in many forms, with one of the most wildly popular being aerobic dances. Since they first became popular in the 1970s, aerobic dance exercises have continuously increased in popularity. The combination of exercise and music has proven to be so much fun, that aerobic exercise is now commonly coupled with music. Even joggers, cyclists and speed-walkers listen to music while working out. By providing rhythmic timing, the movements are more fun and the exercises themselves seem less taxing.

Aerobics exercises are generally split into two different categories: high-impact and low-impact aerobic activity. High-impact aerobics combine music with aggressive, active movements like kicking, bending or jumping. These energetic moves create the same results as cardio exercises like biking, running, swimming or brisk walking. Low-impact aerobics make use of less jarring movements, and are generally less intense than high-impact aerobics. Many doctors suggest taking part in low impact aerobic exercise, as it involves a reduced risk of physical injury.

There are many popular variations to aerobic exercise:

**Slide Aerobics:** Energetic movements are combined with adjustable slides that serve as the main exercise equipment. The slides can be adjusted depending on a persons need for space. Some fitness programs use a combination of slide aerobics with other exercises.

**Step and Double-Step Aerobics:** Step aerobics are names for the use of a platform with stepping motions that create the cardio routine. As the name suggests, double-step aerobics makes use of two steps. Although there has been some debate over the effectiveness and safety of step exercises, many fitness buffs still swear over its viability. The sheer volume of workout videos and paid programs that continue to flood markets around the world are testament to the fact that many people find success with step aerobics.

**Country Aerobics:** One of the growing aerobic exercise fads is country aerobics. Upbeat country music is combined with line dancing moves for a fun workout. People of all ages enjoy country aerobics because it is fun without being overwhelming, with a manageable level of difficulty for older participants.

**Funk Aerobics:** Combine classic funk, street jam, hip-hop and rap music with a stationary workout, and you've got funk aerobics. This type of aerobic exercise has been around since the early 90's, when it was introduced to old-school beats like MC Hammer. Funk aerobics is performed on equipment like treadmills and stationary bikes.

**Interval Exercise:** Many fitness enthusiasts believe that working out at a steady pace does not promote the greatest degree of weight loss. Interval exercise was born from this theory. Interval aerobics uses alternating workout intensities to maximize the number of calories burned.

**Water Aerobics:** Also called Aqua Exercise or Aquafit, working out in waist-deep water has been promoted by many experts as an ideal exercise form. Combining water with physical activity is used both as a therapeutic activity, and a weight loss aid. Water aerobics are less strenuous than other water activities such as regular backstroke or water polo. This type of aerobic exercise is very low-impact and basically makes use of the water's natural resistance. Despite the ease of the exercises, this method is excellent at building endurance, strength and stamina while promoting weight loss.

Ever since aerobic exercise burst onto the fitness scene some thirty years ago, the combinations of movements and music have only increased in popularity. From low-impact water activities to high kicking step classes, aerobic exercise provides people of all ages and abilities with fun and functional ways to burn calories, keep in shape and stay heart-healthy.