

Dr. Brendon Gurd and Jacob Bonafiglia interviewed by The Telegraph, Lifestyle/Beauty on 23 Jan 2017

Why your exercise routine might not be working - and the at-home test you can try to find out



Credit: Victoria'a Sport

- [Victoria Hall](#), Acting Beauty Director

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As the end of January draws closer, some of us, who started the year feeling pumped-up and motivated, might be feeling our enthusiasm for the gym dwindle. Fast forward two or three weeks and at least half of us will have given up on our New Year's resolution to get fit altogether. The most popular reason for this is that we don't see or feel the results we anticipated.

Not everyone sees their fitness levels rise despite upping the ante with their exercise regime. In fact 'non-responders' as those who don't respond to their exercise are called by experts, are surprisingly common. A new study has found that just because we're not reaping the rewards from our current exercise routine, doesn't mean we should give up entirely though. Instead, you might just need to switch what you're doing at the gym.

Researchers at [Queen's University](#) and University of Ottawa took 21 men and women and put them through three weeks of either continuous endurance (continuous cycling) or sprint interval training for four days a week. The groups fitness levels were assessed and then after a three-month break to restore their original fitness, participants then completed three weeks of the other type of training.



Credit: Victoria's Sport

“As these training protocols are fundamentally opposite, we used them to test our hypothesis that individuals will respond differently to different types of exercise training,” explains lead author Jacob Bonafiglia.

Over the course of the study, the group’s fitness level as a whole improved, however when researchers drilled down into individuals performances they found that one third didn’t respond to endurance and roughly the same amount didn’t show any improvement after three weeks on interval training. Importantly, no one was worse off from participating, but the study proved that one type of exercise doesn’t necessarily suit all.



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How do you find out if your regime is working for you?

“The simplest approach is completing some sort of exercise test such as walking or running a certain distance or climbing sets of stairs and monitoring how you feel,” says Bonafiglia. “After

a couple of weeks of following your regime, repeat the exercise test and reassess how you feel. If you feel better, the exercise training is likely working for you.”

If your fitness levels haven't improved, Bonafiglia recommends switching up your routine. “If you were primarily completing endurance style exercise, try experimenting with higher intensity interval training.” Essentially, it's a matter of trial and error.

“When someone starts working out it's about getting them to move more, understand why they are doing certain exercises and, most importantly make it enjoyable,” says personal trainer JP West. “If you enjoy it, you're more likely to come back and keep going.”