

# Terry Talks Nutrition

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF AMERICA



## Exercising for Twelve Minutes

### Will Reduce Your Risk of Heart Disease More Effectively than Running a Marathon

I have worked out off and on almost all my life. At one time in my teens and early 20's, at 5'7" tall, my weight ballooned to 250 pounds. When I was in the Marine Corps I was encouraged to work out. Maybe forced is a better word, since the obstacle course and a regimen of 10-mile runs started my daily exercise routine. During the same time a Captain in the Marine Corps mentored me in weight lifting and physical exercise and introduced me to my first health food store in Oceanside, California. The lifestyle that I adopted then eventually brought me to where I am today – healthy, at an appropriate weight, and with a better understanding about health and nutrition. It changed my whole life. Now I hope I can help you change your life.

My primary focus when I first started a workout program was on lifting in order to get stronger, not necessarily healthier. Most of my exercises were heavy squats, dead lifts, bench presses and cheating curls. Through the years I tried to continue an exercise program of running for cardiovascular conditioning and additional weight lifting. I was doing about 1-1 ½ hours three to four times a week. While I received good benefit from this form of exercise, it was just too time consuming. With my busy schedule of running a business, having a family and extensive travel, I found that I just could not afford the time I was devoting to working out. I began searching for some form of exercise that could give me a full body workout, including cardiovascular, in a limited amount of time.

In my search I ran across information on **kettlebell** training. If you haven't ever seen a kettlebell, it looks like a cannonball with a handle and weighs anywhere from 5# to 106#. My goal was to give me and my 400+ muscles, including the most important muscle, my heart, a vigorous workout in the shortest period of time. I kept seeing mention of an exercise program designed by Dr. Al Sears called PACE. I was also made aware of it by a good friend, Dr. Jonathan Wright. I had been using a similar routine, not because I'm so smart, but because I could not afford the time to work on individual muscle groups but still wanted to stay reasonably healthy, lean and toned. I started working out on my own with the kettlebells. My routine lasted 12-20 minutes, two or three times a week.

Over a course of two years I was able to stay in very good shape and did not lose the benefits of my prior exercise routine where I was spending 1-1½ hours on each work out. It was proof that I could stay as fit as before but on 1/3 or less the time that I had been devoting to exercise. This is a routine that everybody can do. You select the type of exercise and the degree of intensity. Combine that with rest in between the exercises and you have the program.

Dr. Sears documented that a short workout routine with emphasis on high intensity and ample rest in between could accomplish more than a long, slow paced form of exercise. Researchers at Laval University in Quebec divided participants into two groups, a long duration exercise group and an interval short term exercise group. They had the long duration group cycle up to 45 minutes without interruption. The short term interval group cycled in numerous short bursts of 15-90 seconds while resting in between. The long duration group burned twice as many calories so you would assume they would burn more fat. However, when the researchers recorded their body composition measurements, the interval group showed they lost the most fat. In fact, the interval group lost nine times more fat than the endurance group for every calorie burned.

In another research study from the large Harvard Health Professionals Study, researchers followed over 7,000 people. They found that the key to exercise is not length or endurance. It's intensity. The more energy a person exerted, the lower their risk of heart disease. High intensity exercise can also help you live longer. Another Harvard Study compared vigorous and light exercise. Those who performed more vigorous exercise had a lower risk of death than those who performed less vigorous exercise.

Short interval exercise maximizes fat “after burn”. Developed in the 1960’s by Dr. Per Asrand, the term fatrtlek, meaning “speed play”, described this type of exercise used by the Swedes. The major benefits of interval training, or in other words short burst training or “SBT”, raises levels of human growth hormone, burns more calories, taps the strength of large muscle fibers and develops more muscle and strength and greater fitness in less time. Animals who are strong and powerful do not run long distances but maintain their power and strength by using short bursts of energy to capture their next meal, or to use that burst of energy to escape from being some other animal’s next meal. I’m not an advocate for long distance running (marathons). Although this may be a sport, it’s not a healthy one, and in fact it actually is very damaging to the muscles, particularly the heart. Take a look at runners who sprint with short bursts and then rest. They have lean, muscular, healthy looking bodies. People who run marathons will lose weight but also their muscle tone, and tend to have higher body fat to lean muscle ratio. An old acquaintance, a young man in his late 20’s very active running marathons and playing tennis, was about 5’8” and weighed around 145 pounds but had a body fat ratio to lean muscle of 24%. Although being slim and lean he was a good candidate for a heart attack.

Scientific studies back short burst exercise versus long endurance exercise. Running a marathon creates an inflammatory storm in the body that is identical to the early symptoms of heart disease. In the research of Dr. Sears, he notes one study in particular which found that 35% of marathoners had significant levels of arterial plaque compared to just 22% of non-marathon runners. That’s an increased risk of over 50%. Dr. Sears also points to the Harvard Health Professionals Study which found the key to lowering heart disease risk is the intensity of the exercise – not repetition, endurance and duration.

Long distance running is very damaging because it creates large quantities of free radicals and inflammation. Heart attacks are just as common in long distance runners as they are in sedentary people. If you are going to continue to run marathons, I would encourage you to use an antioxidant supplement. I would recommend a clinically studied whole grape extract including the pulp, skin, juice and seed. A clinical study on this extract verified faster recovery time, more endurance and stamina, less muscle cramping and muscle damage. I would also encourage the use of curcumin which is a very powerful anti-inflammatory, pain reliever and antioxidant. Among all foods, turmeric (containing curcumin) has the highest ORAC value of 159,227 (per 100 grams).

I have researched and personally experience the benefits of intense, short burst exercise. In my 12-20 minute exercise program, I primarily use a series of kettlebell swings and a stationary recumbent bike. I use either a 44# or 53# kettlebell and do a kettlebell swing 30-35 times which takes about 20-30 seconds and is like running 200 meters as fast as you can. I then do a two minute rest (active) following the intense burst of activity. My two minutes of rest is usually at the lowest level on a recumbent bike. I call this active rest. This is to provide continued circulation of the blood and to remove lactic acid from the muscles. Depending on the level of fitness, people can start off with a 5# kettlebell or whatever is most suitable. Women will find the 5# or 10# kettlebell more than enough. Men may want to do 10# or 20# for a good exercise regimen.

Even if you can only begin exercising and doing a kettlebell swing using a 10 ounce can of peas, that would be a good place to start and progressively increase your intensity. When the kettlebell swing is done correctly and over a sufficient period of time, every muscle in the body is working. (To see the kettlebells used correctly go to [www.artofstrength.com](http://www.artofstrength.com) and watch some of the instructional videos.) You want to continue doing the swing until you can no longer breathe and then take a two minute rest. Repeat this sequence five or six times or as long as it takes to do in a period of 12-20 minutes. Some people do the kettlebell swing for 30-35 swings, and then for their rest period they jump rope for two minutes. I can’t for the life of me jump rope so I use the recumbent bike as an active rest period. It is never a good idea to sit down for your rest period. You want to continue moving or walking around or bouncing on your feet. I think everyone can find 12-20 minutes three or four times a week. In one of Dr. Sears’ most severe cases, he worked with a lady who started off walking for 45 seconds and then rested two minutes and walked an additional 45 seconds and continued this process. Altogether she lost over 60 pounds and was in much better health and had nice muscle tone. The whole idea is to exercise for 20-30 seconds at your highest level of intensity.

Remember, you are only competing against yourself so work as hard as you can at some form of exercise for 20-30 seconds. For me it’s the kettlebells. For others it may be sprinting or swimming 100 yards as fast as you can with a two minute rest. This is repeated until you have your 12-20 minutes in. I believe everyone can do this. I challenge you to use my menu plan and this exercise program for a minimum of six months and watch the unbelievable results you’ll achieve. I will give you a couple websites that I think you should explore so you can learn more: [www.alsearsmd.com](http://www.alsearsmd.com) and [www.dragondoor.com](http://www.dragondoor.com) and [www.artofstrength.com](http://www.artofstrength.com) and [www.kettleworx.com](http://www.kettleworx.com).