

Is HIT Training For You?

HIT or high-intensity training means that you use heavy resistance in your exercises with short rest periods in between. An example of high-intensity of training is seen in Crossfit and other similar programs.

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, HIT training is now the trend and will be the most popular form of fitness training in 2014. It should also be noted that there seems to be a trend toward greater use of such high-intensity training among athletes.

The benefit of HIT in fitness training appears to be mainly in the short amount of workout time that it takes to achieve increases in strength. What is rarely if ever mentioned, however, is the number of injuries that participants sustain. Nor is it brought out how long the strength gains remain when you cease working out.

In my experiences which are indicative of what others are also experiencing, the number of such injuries appears to be on the rise. What is especially noteworthy is that these injuries are often quite debilitating. The reasons for this are many.

Foremost is that when you use heavy weights in the initial stages of training is impossible to learn proper and effective technique. But proper technique is the first thing that you should learn when undertaking a weight training program. It is the key to not only effective continual growth in regard to strength and other physical capabilities, but the key to injury prevention.

Proper technique is also the key to making the strength more usable in your everyday activities as well as athletic endeavors. It is especially important for athletes as it is the basis for effective execution of their skills and development of the physical qualities specific to the skills.

What appears to be most important in the HIT training is overcoming the weight regardless of how it is done. I recall watching a Crossfit woman participant trying to do an overhead press on YouTube. She had to contort the body in every which way in an attempt to get the bar overhead. I had to cringe just watching her.

Her fellow participants who were watching her do the exercise were giving her loud vocal support and cheered when she finally raise the bar overhead. This was a classic example indicating that overcoming the weight was more important than how it was done.

In some of the high-intensity programs a daily workout is prescribed that often requires the participant to go to exhaustion or to the point of throwing up. This is but another example of the main objective being overcoming a quantity of work as opposed to having quality in the work.

Training principles regarding periodization, gradualness, progressive overload and especially individualization of training are completely ignored. These (and other principles) are very important tenants of safe and effective training that have been proven to produce the greatest and most effective results from any training program.

However, in such cases it is only a matter of time before the participant is injured. In addition, the amount of lasting strength developed in the muscles, can be debated. HIT training is definitely not a controlled situation that allows you to properly guide the individual's development.

Keep in mind that when you use a high-intensity program (weights in the 85 to 95% of maximum zone) you do not have optimal adaptation taking place. This occurs only when you use moderate intensity with the weights in the 75 to 85% of maximum zone.

Thus science tells us that the HIT program or any high-intensity program is not most conducive in the initial stages of training for effective growth and development of strength and/or other physical qualities. It may be the trend mainly because of the short workout time, but more important is to ask yourself if this is the kind of development you want.