Starting Your Aerobic and Resistance Exercises With RA

by BRENDA VANTA

Rheumatoid Arthritis Exercises

You probably read in magazines how various exercises can improve V02 max and wonder why this is important. V02 max, also known as maximal oxygen uptake, is a marker of cardio respiratory fitness and can tell someone's capacity to perform a workout and his aerobic endurance.

V02 and Cardio Respiratory Fitness

Basically, V02 max reflects the maximum amount of oxygen a person can use during intense, maximal exercise and is calculated in millimeters of oxygen consumed in one minute per body weight kilogram. It is easy to measure the V02 max; what you have to do is to perform a high intensity, maximal, all-out effort (on a treadmill or bicycle), while supervised by a healthcare professional.

The more oxygen you can use during an intense exercises, the more energy your body can produce, and this energy is needed during both aerobic and resistance exercises.

Cardio Respiratory Fitness and Health Benefits

Beyond your ability to exercise, the cardio respiratory fitness can protect you against cardio-vascular diseases or other medical problems.

For example, in a 2013 study conducted on patients with rheumatoid arthritis, the researchers recommended a six month individualized fitness plan, including aerobic and resistance high intensity workouts. The subjects performed their workout three times per week and the results were compared with a control group. The authors concluded that an individualized aerobic and resistance exercise program can improve cardio respiratory fitness and cardiovascular risk factors such as blood pressure, cholesterol levels, insulin resistance, body composition (percentage of body fat) as well as the disease severity and activity in cases of rheumatoid arthritis.

A Sample Workout

Try some HIIT (high intensity interval training), which had been shown to improve the cardio respiratory fitness in record time. Based on Dr. Tabata's extensive research on HIIT, you can improve V02 max and aerobic power by 15 percent in just six weeks, using four minute workouts at high intensity . A personal trainer can recommend an individualized program to suit your needs. If you suffer from arthritis or have low back pain, for example, the therapist will recommend specific Rheumatoid Arthritis exercises or will tell you how to modify your workout.

The best HIIT workouts follow the following principles: 20 second highly intense exercise, followed by 10 seconds of rest. The exercises included in the workout can be cardio or super cardio (plyometrics, also known as jumping training), as well as strength and resistance exercises. Other exercises can target the core, and improve balance and stability.

Sample workout: you can run in place (high knees) for 20 seconds and rest for 10 seconds; this would be the cardio component. The second exercise can be lateral plank for 20 seconds, followed by a rest for 10 seconds (this exercise improves your core, stability and flexibility). The third exercise can be a bicycle crunch performed fast for 20 seconds, followed by 10 seconds rest (this exercise is great for core and strength; you can repeat this sequence for a total of 4-10 minutes. Remember to include warm up and cool down periods to prevent muscle and joint injuries and soreness.