

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink t-shirt, red shorts, a grey visor, and purple sneakers, is performing a bicep curl with a red dumbbell. She is standing in a grassy field under a clear blue sky. Her right arm is raised, holding the dumbbell high, while her left arm is bent at the elbow, holding the dumbbell near her shoulder. She is smiling and looking towards the camera.

# your ideal workout

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umpires the cardio versus strength match to find the best exercise for your body goals.

## I want to maintain my weight

Maintenance is all about getting your exercise to a level you can sustain – both in terms of frequency and intensity. However, be careful not to overcommit, so you don't run yourself ragged and fall short of your target. Instead, ensure you include days off, try a range of different activities and change your routine every six to eight weeks.

**Cardio or strength?** Both. To help maintain body weight and prevent gain, you should ideally aim for about 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity on most days of the week. Include a variety of cardio, such as spin classes, and strength training activities, like Pump, that you enjoy at a level where you huff and puff.

## I want to actively lose weight

One of the best strategies when you're just starting to exercise for weight loss is increasing the time spent being active and decreasing the time you spend being sedentary.

**Cardio or strength?** Cardio. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days at a pace where you can talk but not sing. Ideal activities include brisk walking, swimming or cycling initially on a mostly flat terrain.

## I want to tone up for the beach

At this stage, you're more than likely used to maintaining your weight and exercising regularly, but just want to get swimsuit ready in time for summer and the holiday season.

**Cardio or strength?** Both. Get the best of both worlds quickly in circuit training. Either join a class or set up your own workout with a mix of cardio and strength stations. Cardio stations include running, skipping and cycling. Strength training includes lunges, squats, bicep curls, crunches and push-ups. Spend between 30 to 60 seconds on each station and vigorously continue the circuit non-stop for at least 20 minutes (don't forget a warm-up and cool-down) between three and five times a week.

## I need to control my stress levels

Exercise is beneficial in helping reduce stress levels. For best results, select activities that are rhythmic, flowing and repetitive. They should be enjoyable, relaxing and soothing.

**Cardio or strength?** Cardio, but strength comes in a close second. For optimum stress reduction go for cardio like walking and cycling at the beach or in the bush. When it comes to strength training, yoga or Pilates are ideal.

## I want to improve my fitness

If you're serious about fitness, find something to train for, like a fun run, or join a competitive sports team. Focus on increasing the intensity and duration of your workouts.

**Cardio or strength?** Both. You need to increase the intensity and duration of both cardio and strength sessions if your aim is improved fitness. For cardio, try running for longer and/or including sprints in your workout. For strength training, increase the number of repetitions you do and/or lift heavier weights.

For more information about exercise in Australia, visit [healthinsite.gov.au](http://healthinsite.gov.au) or [publichealth.org.nz](http://publichealth.org.nz) in New Zealand.