

Resistance Training or Aerobic Training: Which Is Best for Weight/Fat Loss?

That's precisely the question that researchers from North Carolina wanted to investigate.

The study, published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* (2012; 113 [12], 1831-37), included data from 119 sedentary individuals, aged 18-70. They were all overweight or moderately obese. Researchers organized the participants into three groups: resistance training, aerobic training and RT/AT combination. The RT group met three times per week and completed 1 set of 8-12 repetitions during weeks 1 and 2; 2 sets of 8-12 reps during weeks 3 and 4; and 3 sets of 8-12 reps during week 5. If a participant reached 12 repetitions, the supervising researcher increased the load by 5 pounds. The AT group completed the caloric equivalent of 12 miles at 65%-80% of peak VO_2 per week. The combination group

completed both protocols.

Which intervention proved most effective?

"Body mass significantly decreased in the AT and AT/RT [groups] but significantly increased in RT," the authors explained. "Fat mass and waist circumference significantly decreased in AT and AT/RT groups but were not altered in RT. Measures of lean body mass significantly increased in RT and AT/RT but not in AT."

Jade Teta, ND, CSCS, co-owner of Metabolic Effect in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is careful not

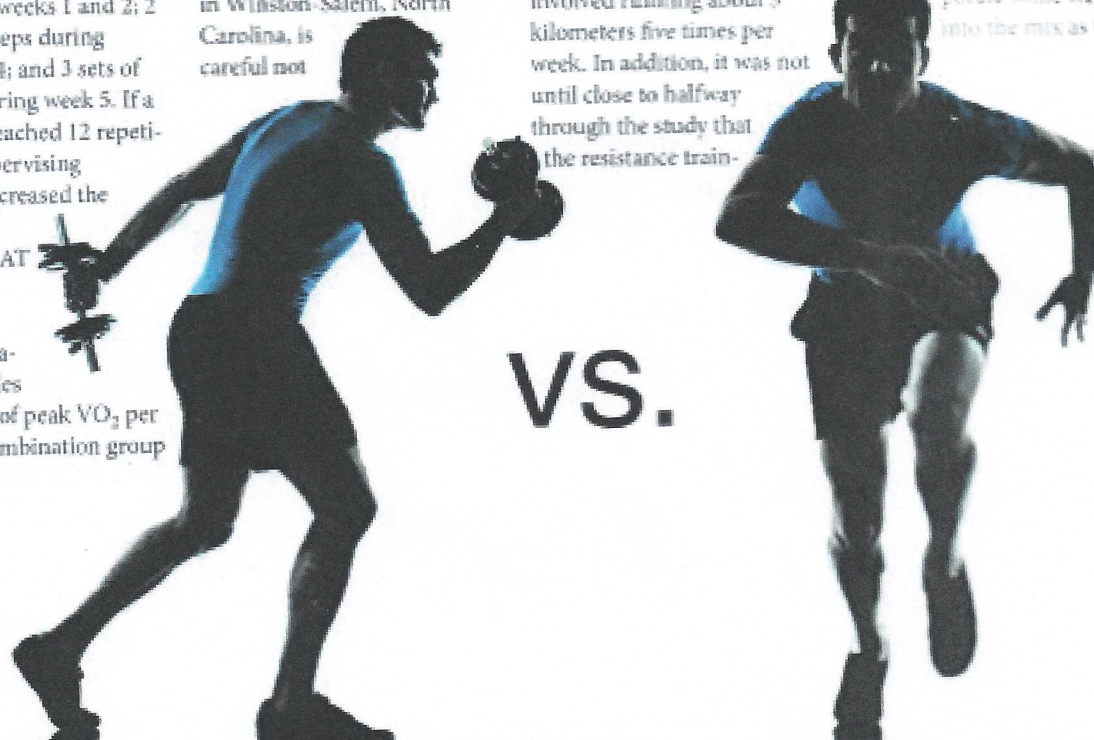
to give this report too much weight. "Aerobic exercise does result in more weight loss than weight training does in the short run," he says. "But weight loss does not equal fat loss, and as expected, the resistance training group gained some muscle, while the aerobic group lost some."

Teta also cautions that the exercise protocols appeared to be mismatched. "The resistance training regime was a very basic program... while the aerobic program was much more strenuous and involved running about 5 kilometers five times per week. In addition, it was not until close to halfway through the study that the resistance train-

ing group actually got up to 3 sets per exercise."

He adds that exercisers shouldn't be quick to switch exercise protocols based on new reports.

"If something works for you, it does not stop working because a study says it doesn't work," he advises. "Do the exercise that you enjoy, that allows you to be most efficient with your time and that maximizes fat loss while minimizing lean tissue loss. For some, aerobics fits the bill; most will likely need to incorporate some weights into the mix as well."



People Are Talking About . . .

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