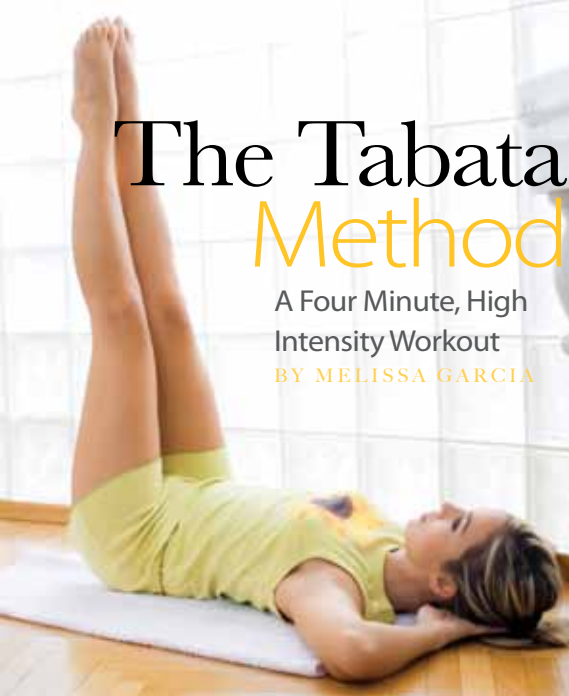


The Tabata Method

A Four Minute, High Intensity Workout

BY MELISSA GARCIA



I like to work out hard and efficiently. Most of us live busy lives without much time to exercise. And even if there were extra hours a day, most of us would probably rather do something else than live at the gym. Learn how you can lose weight, get fit, get stronger in less than 30 minutes and even in 4 minutes!

This past year, to the delight of my clients,

I discovered a real treasure called The Tabata Method. It is a workout designed by Dr. Izumi Tabata, a former researcher at Japan's National Institute of Fitness and Sports. As head coach of the Japanese speed skating team, Tabata designed an extreme interval training program for his skaters. Researchers found that the athletes' maximum aerobic capacity improved by 14% after using the method for six weeks. Furthermore, it improved their anaerobic capacity by 28%. This protocol challenged the aerobic and anaerobic systems simultaneously. Tabata's research found that this type of short term interval training not only lowered the ratio of lean body mass to fat without wasting muscle, the training burned up to 50% fat tissue more efficiently than with traditional low-intensity exercise. Though it was initially designed for competitive athletes, Tabata type classes are popping up in boot camps and gyms all over the country. However, you don't need a gym or fancy equipment to get a Tabata workout.

Just pick one exercise that utilizes several muscle groups at the same time. (I personally like prisoner squats or air squats,

but you can do Tabata with other exercises like push-ups, burpees, thrusters, and jump rope.)

1. For twenty seconds do as many repetitions as you can.
2. Rest for ten seconds
3. Repeat seven more times. (It's good to have a wall clock close by with a second hand. No cheating!)

At the end of 4 minutes you should be breathing very hard, pretty much a 9 or 10 on the intensity scale. If, like me, 4 minutes of pain isn't quite enough, give yourself about 3 minutes rest before moving onto another exercise and another round of Tabata. This workout is definitely not for the fainthearted, so go in fighting hard. Even though Tabata is designed to be an extreme form of physical training, I recommend doing it only once or twice a week. There's nothing wrong with pushing yourself to the limits with exercise, but be smart and be safe! It's also wise to consult your doctor and a personal trainer before attempting Tabata.

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