

# BIGGEST MOVER!

## Cardio

Cardio refers to cardiovascular exercise, which involves the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. Cardiovascular fitness refers to the effectiveness of the body at taking in oxygen through the lungs, transferring that oxygen to the blood, and pumping the blood via the heart to the cells of the body. The stronger this system is, the better it is at its job. We become better at an activity through work. Our heart is the same. Exercise challenges our heart by increasing the demand on it, making it stronger.

Think of this in terms of the muscles in the thigh. These muscles are used every day when standing up, walking, running, and jumping; however, no one would assert that standing up from a desk to walk to the coffee maker is going to make the thigh muscles stronger. In order to strengthen the muscles, they have to be challenged by placing increased demand on them. That may be through weight training, like squats, or endurance training, like cycling. A challenging effort makes the muscle better at doing everyday activities.

The heart is the same. If you are reading this then your heart is beating; however, your heart is probably not being challenged by this activity. To strengthen your heart muscle you have to challenge it. Increasing the demand on the heart through exercise makes the heart better at its everyday activity of moving the blood throughout your body.

Cardio training in group fitness refers to the class or the part of the class where the heart rate is raised to benefit the circulatory system. Examples are Group Groove, Group Kick, Group Ride, Group Step, or the first 20 minutes of Group Active.

### **The Benefits Of Cardio**

*Cardio training can help you:*

- ▶ Decrease your blood pressure
- ▶ Increase the strength of your heart muscle (a stronger heart doesn't have to work as hard)
- ▶ Increase HDL cholesterol (the good kind)
- ▶ Increase your metabolism (the rate at which you convert food into energy)
- ▶ Maintain a healthy weight

All of these benefits reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. You'll also have more energy to perform the activities of your daily life, such as walking your dog, playing with your children or grand children, or grocery shopping.

### **What To Expect In Class**

Cardio training begins with a warm-up to prepare the cardiovascular system, as well as the muscles and joints, for the work that follows. Once warm, the intensity of the class (movement) will increase and then vary, alternating between work and recovery over the course of the workout. This work and recovery style is known as interval style training. It has been shown to be a very effective method for increasing cardio fitness.

Understand that Group Fitness classes like Group Groove, Group Kick, Group Ride, Group Step and Group Active are designed for people at various levels of cardio fitness. Listen to your body and work at a level that is challenging but achievable for you on any given day. The true key to cardio fitness is consistency. Try different cardio based activities to find something that appeals to you. Doing something you enjoy will help you stay with the exercise activity so the cardiovascular benefits continue.