



This Old-School Workout Still Delivers Results

Posted on Thursday November 29, 2018 by Theona Layne

The alarm chimes and you find yourself groggily hitting the snooze button for the fourth time. You're not ready for yet another workout session, but you manage to drag yourself out of bed anyway. If this sounds like you, then maybe it's time for something different: it's time to take it old school. Peripheral Heart Action (PHA) training is back, and it's a tried-and-true way to shake things up.

PHA training: What is it and who is it for?

Peripheral Heart Action (PHA) training is a type of circuit workout that incorporates your entire body. It was developed back in the 1940s by physiologist Dr. Arthur Steinhaus, but PHA didn't become popular until bodybuilder Bob Gadjia made it a part of his fitness routine two decades later.

PHA training consists of 5-6 circuit exercises. Each exercise alternates between upper and lower body movements of 15 repetitions each

followed by 30-60 seconds of rest. This technique decreases lactic acid buildup, muscle fatigue, and soreness so you're less tired and more likely to finish your workout strong.

Bonus: you don't even need a gym! All you need for a great workout is some resistance equipment like resistance bands, dumbbells or kettlebells.

You don't have to be in any certain shape to start PHA.

PHA training is customizable to your fitness level. If you're new to exercise, it may be a good idea to start with lighter weights, fewer circuits, and easier exercise movements.

Even if you're a regular exerciser, intermediate and advanced exercises can still benefit from PHA training, according to Armen Ghazarians, certified fitness instructor and founder of Finish Fit®, LLC. He says that Peripheral Heart Action training can "help progress you past that plateau and pushes you further towards your [fitness] goals."

PHA VS. HIIT

You've probably heard of a little workout technique called HIIT, or high-intensity interval training. It's one of the [most popular workouts](#) out there, and with good reason. With HIIT, you can burn a lot of calories, boost your metabolism and strengthen and tone muscles in a short time.

Unfortunately, there are a few drawbacks to doing HIIT such as overtraining and injuries. According to [studies like this one](#), HIIT workouts can lead to rhabdomyolysis, a condition that causes muscle breakdown and allows toxic substances to enter the bloodstream leading to kidney damage.

This is one of the advantages PHA training has over HIIT. By alternating between upper and lower body muscle groups and doing a moderate number of reps, no more than 15, you're far less likely to overwork and/or injure muscles.

Also, according to Ghazarians, HIIT workouts can only be done a few times a week because of the amount of stress it places on the body.

For this reason, he recommends that exercise newbies use PHA training as a gateway to fitness training to “develop the conditioning necessary to perform HIIT training maybe at a later date.”

Science backs PHA training

In this [study](#) published in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, researchers compared two workout groups: those who did PHA training and those who did HIIT workouts.

The PHA training group gained *greater muscular strength* especially in the chest, back, calves, legs, and shoulders over the other group. The scientists also found that PHA *improves metabolism* at the cellular level and provides better management of metabolic syndrome, blood sugar, and blood pressure levels than High-Intensity Interval Training.

Ready to give PHA training a try?

If you're up for a challenging, non-intimidating workout, PHA training could be a great alternative for you.

Here's a simple PHA workout you can try. We even provided a handy chart. If you're a beginner, start with light weights and lower reps. If you're at an intermediate or advanced exercise level, try using heavier weights for more of a challenge.

Ghazarians suggests using weights at 60-75 percent of your maximum lift, which is the heaviest weight you can lift at one time.

Beginner fitness level: start at 60 percent lift max

Intermediate fitness level: start at 65 percent lift max

Advanced fitness levels: start at 70 percent lift max

For example, if you're a beginner and the most you can lift at one time is 20 pounds, then 60 percent of your max is 12lbs.

Directions:

Choose 5-6 circuit exercises (like from the chart below). Alternate between upper and lower body.

Do 15 repetitions of each exercise, followed by 30-60 seconds of rest. Then, choose an exercise in the opposite column and repeat.

Upper Body Exercises	Lower Body Exercises
Overhead Press – Hold weights straight overhead. With your abs engaged, bend your elbows and lower the weights to ear level. Press back up and repeat for 15 reps.	Calf Raises – While standing on both feet, push down through your toes while lifting both heels off the ground. Lift yourself up as high as you can. Repeat for 15 reps.
Wall Pushup –Face a wall with your feet at arms length. Bend your elbows and lower your chest towards the wall. Try not to lead with your chin. Repeat for 15 reps.	Assisted Lunges –Stand with your right foot forward and your left foot behind you. Make sure both toes are pointing forward. Bend both knees and dip your body downwards until your knees are at 90-degree angles. Push into your heel to stand up. Repeat for 15 reps on each side.
Dumbbell Rows –Hold weights at a 45-degree angle at your hops. Pull your abs in and keep your back flat. Squeeze your back while pulling your elbows up to your torso. Lower and repeat for 15 reps.	Chair Squats –Place a chair behind you as a guide. Bend your knees and lower into a squat position, sending your hips straight back. Hover just over the chair for one second. Put your weight into your heels and stand up. Do 15 reps.

You aren’t limited to the exercises provided here! Try incorporating other upper and lower body movements like *bench press, leg extension, latissimus dorsi pull-down, leg curl, seated heel raise, and more.*

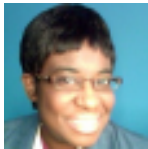
Could you get down with this old-school workout? Let us know in the comments.

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