

# LOW IMPACT HIGH SUCCESS

A guide to understanding the importance of low impact exercise



## MEET OUR TEAM



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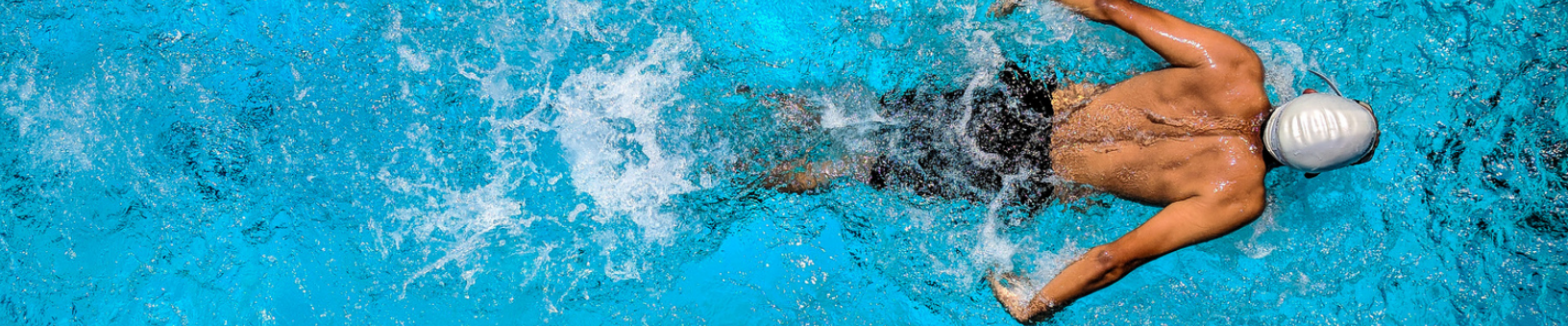
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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOW IMPACT

### Thomas Bennett

The purpose of this article is to define Low Impact Exercise, identify exercises that fall into this category and show why it can be beneficial to any workout routine/programming. In addition a new emergent trend in the fitness and rehabilitation worlds will be defined, it is called High Intensity Incidental Physical Activity or HIIPA.

Low impact exercise is defined by having at least one foot remaining in contact with the ground AT ALL TIMES (1). Therefore, examples of low impact exercise include walking, elliptical, bicycling, rowing, swimming, yoga weight training (both for load and bodyweight). While this definition seems simple (because it is), one must not forget that the difficult part is programming low impact exercises into a sensible workout routine/program to achieve goals of any individual. How does low impact exercise benefit individuals? Low impact exercise has the same benefits as high impact exercise (2). Low impact exercises, when programmed appropriately into a training program/routine, can improve bone density, proprioception, muscular strength and cardio-pulmonary function.



## *"Low impact allows for adaptability when programmed efficiently "*

Why would low impact exercise benefit or compliment a training program? There are several perspectives to consider, but to make things easier, let's identify the larger aspects: Rehabilitation, Weight Loss and Strength and Conditioning. In the context of rehab, some individuals have particularly difficult restrictions as to what they physically can and cannot do. Allowing the option for low impact exercises increases the flexibility in programming while being able to achieve goals on or even ahead of time (3). When considering weight loss, there are those individuals that may be able to participate in high intensity activity but simply will not enjoy it or have difficulty with perceived exertions (4). Low impact exercise again allows for adaptability when programmed efficiently. Finally, in regards to strength training and conditioning the easiest venue to take with low impact exercise is using them for rest/recovery purposes and maintaining cardiovascular levels needed for competition (5) (Sports and Event Specific). To learn more about this particular element you can consult your RecWell Athletic Trainers as strength and conditioning can be moderately to highly specific of individual goals.

High Intensity Incidental Physical Activity (HIIPA) is a new and emerging low impact exercise trend. This type of activity essentially involves doing short bursts of any kind of physical activity throughout your normal day. This is anything that increases your heart rate, whether it be walking up the stairs with a basket of laundry, mowing the lawn or even scrubbing the bathroom floors (6). These activities can also be completed intentionally for reps, just like a normal workout (i.e. big project, break it up into separate parts creating reps. Interestingly enough recent studies have shown that this trend is enough to maintain body weight as long as you watch what you eat and can even maintain positive mental health benefits. While the data is not firm on mental health benefits, studies and industry professionals believe that accomplishing such physical tasks and breaking them into small chunks can at least show mental health benefits (7).

In conclusion there are a variety of reasons that one would participate in low impact exercises. They are safe and can achieve similar goals to that of high impact exercises when programmed appropriately and provide a variety of ways to continue being physically active (especially in the current COVID-19 scenarios) without the use of a gym or even equipment. Finally, they are appropriate for all ages and can be easily adapted to a variety of different circumstances. Low impact exercise is truly a powerful tool with such adaptability that every fitness enthusiast or specialist should not forget to use it!



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