

HELEN TO THE RESCUE

EPOC

The Afterburn

What if you could keep burning calories even after your workout is over? Well, good news: the EPOC effect says you can.

EPOC (Excess post-exercise oxygen consumption) has been linked to increased weight loss and muscle gain. By working out harder, increasing your heart rate and consuming more oxygen, you can keep your metabolism running far after you've left the gym.

So, what exactly is EPOC, and how can you make it work for you?

Just as your car's engine cools to a resting temperature after a long road trip, the same can be said about your body after exercise. Once a workout is over, and you're back in your daily routine, your body's metabolism can continue to burn more calories than when at complete rest. This physiological effect is the amount of oxygen required to restore your body to its normal, resting level of metabolic function (called homeostasis). This can happen for up to 24 hours, according to some sources. Most workouts fall into two categories: **aerobic** or **anaerobic**. Your respiration and heart rate differ in aerobic versus anaerobic activities.

Aerobic exercise

Oxygen is your main energy source during aerobic workouts. During aerobic exercise, you breathe faster and deeper than when your heart rate is at rest. You're maximizing the amount of oxygen in the blood. Your heart rate goes up, increasing blood flow to the muscles and back to the lungs. Examples include walking, cycling, swimming and running.

Anaerobic exercise

Anaerobic exercises are those that involve short, intense bursts of physical activity. During anaerobic exercise, your body requires immediate energy. Anaerobic exercises do not involve an increase in the absorption and transportation of oxygen. Your body relies on stored energy sources, rather than oxygen, to fuel itself. Examples include jumping, sprinting, or heavy weightlifting.

Research has shown that resistance training can provide a greater EPOC effect than running at a steady speed.

The greatest EPOC response is elicited by high-intensity and/or longer-duration cardiorespiratory and resistance exercise. In general, the higher the intensity of exercise (and the further we get from homeostasis), the greater the duration and magnitude of EPOC after exercise.

- Focus more on intensity than duration
- Intervals vs. steady state exercising
- More oxygen = more calories burned
- Count memories, not calories!

Yours in Fitness, Helen

Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics as well as track and field.

She's an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant and Senior fitness specialist. Helen Pufahl is the owner of Unique Health & Fitness.



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