

All About Stair Training

Now we are not talking about Stairmasters or climbers found in your fitness centre. These machines are great, but for the purpose of this article we are talking about good old-fashioned steps – outside or inside and why and how you should incorporate them into your weekly routine.

Why you should consider stair climbing workouts

1. Improved Vo2 Max (measure of oxygen intake and cardiovascular ability*)

Several studies have shown the positive effects of improved Vo2 Max from stair climbing.

- An 8-week study in 2005 found that walking 200 steps a day, 5 days a week increased Vo2 max by 17%
- A 2017 study found that a few minutes of stair sprint interval training three times a week, improved overall cardiovascular fitness after just 6 weeks.
- A 2019 study also found that three quick stair-climbing breaks over the day led to increased oxygen uptake, a sign that cardiovascular fitness is improving.



2. Goal Setting

- One of the great things about adding climbing stairs into your program is the success you feel in accomplishing the task. Much like executing push-ups, you will get better and be able to do more without getting as tired or as sore as you did at the start. Because the exercise is anaerobic, shooting up your heart rate, you often get a great endomorphic “high” at the top of those stairs.

3. Caloric Expenditure

- If you do not want to do the math; here is an on-line calculator to give you an idea of the calories you burn going up and down stairs. <https://www.burned-calories.com/sport/climbing-stairs>

Burning Calories (kcal) - Climbing Stairs

Minutes	140 lbs	180 lbs	220 lbs
15 Min.	127	164	202
30 Min.	255	327	404

How to do a stair climbing workout

I feel like writing what NOT to do, because in my experience as a trainer the issues are always the same: not enough warm up, too much too soon, not enough recovery time between sessions, and inappropriate footwear. (hint - flip flops are inappropriate footwear). More is not better when it comes to stairs. Going up is not usually the culprit but going down can bother your knees, hips, and ankles. You need to allow your joints and muscles to catch up to your cardio and your desire for more steps!

BEGINNER STAIR WORKOUT – 5 minutes progressing to 15 minutes

You can use inside stairs, but I find the best session is outdoors up a long flight of stairs (50+). These types of stairs can be found in stadiums, down to the beach or connecting alleys to streets (shortcuts). Put your timer on so you can get an idea of how long it takes you and to set a rest interval. This type of training should NOT be done daily, twice a week is great, with rest days in between. Allow your muscles & joints to adapt. If you are using stairs in a Highrise, consider taking the elevator down.

Perform each of the following exercises for 10–15 seconds

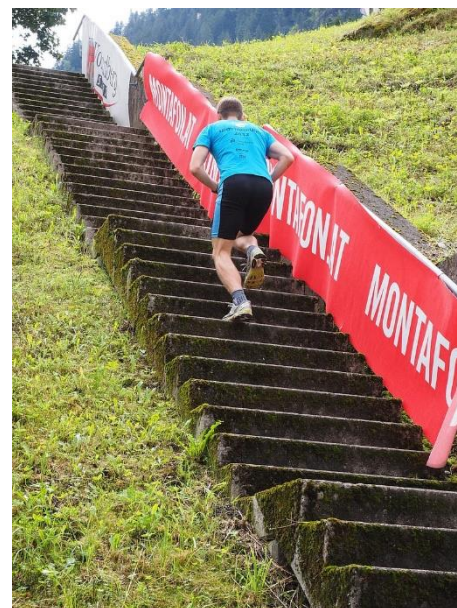
Once the exercise is complete, jog back down the stairs and begin the next one.

- **Walk or run:** 2 steps at a time
- **Sprint:** 1 step at a time
- **High knees:** 1 step at a time
- **Hop on one foot:** 1 or 2 steps at a time
- **Broad jump:** Jump with both feet on or over step

After each circuit, rest for 1–2 minutes.

Repeat for a total of 15 minutes.

Always put safety first by being careful of your foot placement and other people and remember to stretch your leg muscles after.



**VO₂ max (also maximal oxygen consumption, maximal oxygen uptake, peak oxygen uptake or maximal aerobic capacity) is the maximum rate of oxygen consumption measured during incremental exercise; that is, exercise of increasing intensity. The name is derived from three abbreviations: "V" for volume, "O₂" for oxygen, and "max" for maximum.*