

Ask the expert

LIIT

We ask fitness pros to share their insider knowledge – this month, Kira Mahal gives us the lowdown on LIIT



Kira Mahal CEO at personal training network MotivatePT (motivatept.co.uk)

What exactly is LIIT? ‘Chances are you’ve heard of HIIT (high-intensity interval training), a time-efficient workout where you burn fat fast through exercises with short rest periods. But this all-out approach isn’t for everyone. LIIT (low-intensity interval training) is the new kid on the block, offering a challenging workout that’s gentler on the body and joints, with longer rest periods (minutes, rather than seconds) and a low risk of injury – but it still burns fat.’

How does it work? ‘LIIT workouts involve strength training, with a strong focus on controlled movement and how you actually perform each exercise. Done correctly, it’s a safe and sustainable way to build and maintain muscle mass, as well as burn calories and increase mobility, strength and cardiovascular endurance.’

Is it for me? ‘Because LIIT is a low-impact type of exercise, it’s a perfect way to ease into fitness safely – but even experienced gym-goers will be challenged by LIIT, as it requires you to really focus and control every rep of your workout. It’s easy to incorporate LIIT at home: all you need is a set of hand weights and some floor space, and you’re set. Give it a try!’

ESSENTIAL KIT

1kg dumbbell £3,
2kg dumbbell £4.50,
3kg dumbbell £6



‘All you need is a set of hand weights and some floor space, and you’re set,’

‘You can apply the same LIIT principles to your walk to work,’

FIND OUT MORE

- A good example of LIIT is the NHS Couch to 5K programme, which guides anyone new to (or rusty at) running to build up towards jogging or running 5K*.
- Virgin Active gyms offer low-intensity classes such as Floor Barre, which is great for increasing endurance (virginactive.co.uk).

WORDS SARAH DAWSON PHOTOGRAPHY PIXELEYES nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week

KIRA'S TOP TIPS

- ✓ It's essential that you perform any exercise movement correctly. If in doubt, ask a qualified personal trainer to watch and correct you.
- ✓ Warm up before and cool down after each LIIT session. This is important as the muscles must be warm and fired up before you begin the exercises.
- ✓ You can apply the same LIIT principles – low-intensity exercise focusing on controlled movements, followed by a rest – to your walk to work, evening swim or weekend cycle. This makes it a super-effective, and social, way to exercise.

DO: Put aside an hour. An effective LIIT workout should last between 40 and 60 minutes. Aim to work out 3-4 times a week to give your body time to recover properly after each session.

DON'T: Go all-out. You want to aim for 50-80% of your maximum effort to achieve the right fat-burning benefits. Remember: this is LIIT, not HIIT.

‘Done right, LIIT is a safe and sustainable way to build and maintain muscle mass,’

3 OF THE BEST LEGGINGS



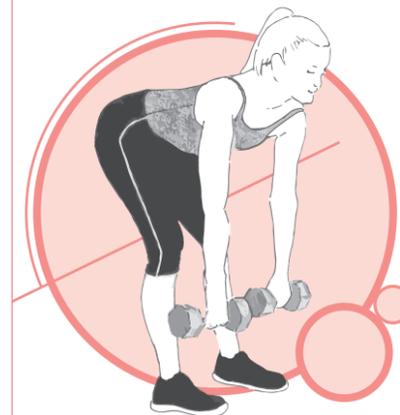
F&F purple geo print leggings £16,
F&F khaki butterfly print leggings £16,
F&F reflective print leggings £18

GET STARTED

Three simple, full-body moves for an easy at-home LIIT workout

STIFF-LEGGED DEADLIFT

Stand straight; hold dumbbells in front of your thighs. Keeping arms and back straight, slowly bend from the waist, brushing the dumbbells against your legs. Pause for 3 seconds; return to standing. Do 3 sets of 15 reps, resting for 2 minutes between sets.



DUMBBELL SHOULDER PRESS

You can do this exercise either standing up or sitting down. Hold a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height, arms out to the side, elbows bent so the dumbbells are level with your ears. Slowly push the weights directly up until your arms are fully extended. Pause, then slowly lower the weights back to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10 reps, resting for 1 minute between sets.



DUMBBELL HIP THRUSTS

Lie down with your back in full contact with the floor, your knees bent, hip-width apart, and feet flat on the floor. Hold a dumbbell across your hips. Drive through your heels and lift your hips up until your body is a straight line from your knees to your shoulders, squeezing your glutes throughout the move. Pause at the top for 1-3 seconds, then slowly lower. Do 3 sets of 20 reps, resting for 1 minute between sets.

