

# An absolute beginners guide to getting fitter.

By Cerin Rees B.Sc.



Cerin Rees Fitness Coaching.  
*"Movement & Variety"*

Tel: (07963) 124685  
[www.clwb-heb-enw.co.uk](http://www.clwb-heb-enw.co.uk)

# An Introduction to Getting Fitter

## 1. What is "Fit"?

A definition of fitness is:

*"The ability of a body to do a task"*

This means there are different types of fitness for different tasks. For example, different types of fitness are needed to:

- Run a marathon
- Sprint 100 meters
- Last 12 rounds of boxing
- Finish the Tour de France
- Work on a construction site
- Work as a firefighter



You need to be physically fit for all the above things. But being fit enough to do one, does not necessarily mean you are fit enough to do one of the others.

For everyday people like you and me, fitness probably means being able to do everything in our normal day to day lives without having to stop to catch our breath every 5 minutes. This is **aerobic fitness** and means our heart and lungs are more efficient workers.

## 2. What happens when we get fitter?

Our bodies adapt and physically change as we get fitter. These changes include:

- Heart gets bigger, stronger and more efficient
- Lungs pass gasses to and from our blood quicker and more efficiently
- Our muscles use energy more efficiently, so can do more before tiring.

All these combined mean that we can do harder work for longer, before we get tired and out of breath.



## 3. Practice makes perfect

Contrary to what some people think, getting out of breath is *a good sign!* Just like everything else in our lives, if we want to get better at something, we need to practice it. In this case, if we want to get better at coping with shortness of breath, we need to practice *being short of breath!*

If we want to get better at working harder and longer than usual, we need to *actually work harder and longer than usual.*

Just like the best way to learn to drive a car is by getting behind the wheel and driving, when it comes to fitness the important thing to remember is:

*Get out of breath, stay out of breath and do it often.*

## 4. How out of breath, for how long and how often?

The official guidelines on aerobic exercise are as follows:

<u>How often</u>	3-5 times per week
<u>How hard</u>	50%-90% of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR)
<u>How long</u>	20-60 minutes
<u>What kind</u>	Rhythmic movement of major muscle groups e.g. jogging, cycling, swimming, playing team or ball games

## 5. So what is my Maximum Heart Rate?

Everyone is different and be aware that heart rates can be artificially altered by some health conditions and medication. Having said this, for the technically minded, you can work out your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) with the following sum:

$$MHR = 220 - (your\ age)$$

For example, the Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) of your average 23 year old will be:

$$220 - 23 = 197 \text{ beats per minute}$$

So 50% of his MHR is  $197 \times 0.5 = 98.5$   
So 90% of his MHR is  $197 \times 0.9 = 177.3$

For the less technically minded, this means you are breathing hard and heavy *but* you must be able to maintain this throughout your workout and you are *not* gasping for breath.

If you do find yourself gasping for breath, simply ease down until your breathing is back under control. If you find yourself breathing easily, just crank the effort up a notch so you are huffing and puffing again, but *not* gasping for air.

## 6. What exercises are best to get fit?

Despite what you may hear or read in glossy magazines, there is no single *best* exercise for general fitness. Here is my simple checklist for what makes a good exercise:

- Something that you enjoy doing (this is the most important part! It must be fun to do, or you won't continue doing it.)
- Something that gets you, and keeps you, out of breath.
- Something that lasts 20 minutes or more.

- Something that you can do at least 3 or more times a week.
- Something that gets your whole body moving (your arms and legs).
- Something that can be varied easily (so you don't get bored).

Most things that fulfill the above checklist are good aerobic exercises. With a bit of imagination you can turn almost anything into an opportunity to improve your fitness.

Some basic examples of exercises include:

- Jogging
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Rowing
- Walking in the hills
- Taking the dog out
- Playing with the kids
- Dancing all night in the club
- Punching & kicking the hell out of a punchbag
- Taking part in exercise classes



As you can see, almost anything can be fantastic and *fun* exercise. But remember,

***Get out of breath, stay out of breath and do it often.***

If you have any questions about fitness and how you can improve it, [contact me](#) for a free consultation, or [see my range of services](#).