**Better than running!**

I love running. Honestly, I loved running back in the day when my knees and hips allowed me the speed and distance to do it. I now really don’t like running because of the biomechanical problems that my body has had since birth that I ignored, without proper coaching and now suffer the consequences from. Individuals who can run into their 50s, 60s and 70s are blessed with good body genetics, mechanics and longevity for that sport.

The best shape I was ever in was back when I ran often and trained for triathlons. The best shape ever, why? Because running simply burns more calories and the high intensity of running melts off the fat.

I don’t run anymore because I can’t, due to really bad knees. But years ago, I discovered cycling, indoor and outdoor but mostly indoor because I could get it done in an hour and have less to worry about than gearing up for outdoors. For me, indoor cycling was the only exercise that I found to give me the same ‘intensity’ that I got when I was running, without the impact on my knees and hips.

This week’s topic was spurred by an article I found on-line called, ‘7 Exercises that burn more calories than running,’ dated April 13, 2017, written by Amy Marturana, msn/SELF.

The calories expenditure rated exercises based on METs burned. METs are a measure of how much energy it takes to complete an activity based on milliliters of oxygen a person consumes per kilogram of body weight while doing that activity. One MET is roughly equal to the amount of energy it takes to sit still.

You can find various metabolic expenditure charts on the internet to see how every activity you do matches up; from gardening to skiing to shopping.

“As the MET value of activity goes up, the ability to burn calories increases,” Pete McCall, an exercise physiologist with the American Council on Exercise was quoted saying the article. “The more intense an exercise or the harder you push yourself, the more oxygen your body needs to complete it; which means, the MET goes up and so do the calories you burn. Bonus, is that the higher the intensity of activity will increase the continued burning of calories at a higher rate after you’ve stopped the activity, thanks to the ‘afterburn affect’.”

Many factors affect MET; total body weight, body fat percentage, age, physical fitness, genetics and environmental conditions. So, calorie expenditure will vary between individuals doing the same activity.

The top exercises from the article, when compared to running, are based on a 150-pound person, running a 10-minute mile pace for 60 minutes which equals burning around 666 calories per hour.

Number 1; Indoor cycling (based on 200 watt intensity). That same 150-pound person will burn approximately 952 calories. Primarily, because indoor ‘spinning’ bikes have you push a wheel that can weigh up to 40-pounds, so there is no ‘coasting’ affect on these indoor bikes. If you turn up the motivational music and change up the intensity, the HIIT (high intensity interval training) affect kicks in and calories are destroyed.

Number 2: Cross-Country skiing. Depending on the experience of the skier can yield up to 850 calories in an hour. Light effort won’t burn as much as faster-speed and harder efforts.

Number 3: Rowing. If you row at 200 watts, which is a vigorous effort a 150-pound person could burn up to 816 calories. Bonus, you’ll gain incredible back strength as well.

Number 4: Jumping rope: 802 calories per hour at a moderate pace, approximately 100 skips per minute. It’s very hard to jump for a consistent hour but an interval workout is also very calorie productive.

Number 5: Kickboxing and other martial arts. Up to 700 calories while you are actively boxing and training.

Number 6. Swimming. Burns up to 680 calories an hour, keeping up a pace of 75 yards per minute.

Number 7. Outdoor cycling. Finds a 680 calorie burn when fast, vigorous pace is kept. Adding in mountainous terrain and hills bumps up that calorie burn.

The key to big calorie burners on any list is that the activities (exercises) use a lot of muscles throughout the body and the activity is challenging.