

# Prof questions focus on aerobic over resistance training

If you're a member of a medical aid rewards programme, you'll know it's very hard to score points for any other form of exercise besides aerobic training.



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However, exercise prescriptions that focus solely on activities such as running, cycling and gym classes are problematic, since resistance training offers a wealth of distinctive benefits over those of aerobic training, says Brandon Shaw, a professor in the Department of Sport and Movement Studies and Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

## Improves muscle metabolic properties

Resistance training should form an integral part of any exercise guideline or programme for health promotion, since this mode of training has a unique ability to improve muscle metabolic properties that may assist in the management and even prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Shaw's focus is on preventing and rehabilitating cerebrovascular disease, which was ranked as the fourth leading cause of death in 2013 by Statistics South Africa, accounting for 4.9% of all deaths, diabetes mellitus, which is ranked fifth and accounted for 4.8% of deaths, other forms of heart disease, which ranked sixth and accounted for 4.6% of all deaths and hypertensive diseases, which ranked seventh and accounted for 3.7% of all deaths in South Africa in 2013.

There is a need for resistance exercise to be viewed by lay individuals and health professionals alike as essential, effective, and easy to perform. He says continuing to prescribe aerobic-only modes of training for health promotion and rehabilitation, many health professionals may be doing their clientele and patients a disservice since the inclusion of resistance training may result in faster, greater and complementary benefits, he argues.

“Resistance training should assume a position at least equal to that of aerobic training when designing exercise programmes and when developing physical activity guidelines. This would motivate health professionals to increasingly make use of resistance training, either alone or in combination with other modalities of exercise,” he says.

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