

# Healthy Habits

## from Prime of Life Fitness

### How the Pledge of Allegiance Helps You Exercise

You won't get extra bonus points for being a good patriot who recites the Pledge of Allegiance while you work out, but this unusual habit can help you determine the right intensity of exercise for your individual fitness level.



Many beginning exercisers have trouble knowing how hard they should be exercising, and as a result they push too hard and get discouraged easily. A simple rule of thumb for gauging the intensity of your aerobic workouts is the "talk test." Simply put, to exercise for aerobic fitness and heart health, most of your workout time should be at a level that still allows you to talk out loud comfortably. To

increase your aerobic fitness, include short segments of work just above that threshold, where talking becomes more challenging, but still possible.

So how does the Pledge of Allegiance fit into this discussion? Using the Pledge of Allegiance as the recited text, researchers at the University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse confirmed that the subjects begin to experience difficulty talking right at the point where their ventilation is increasing disproportionately to the workload. This is the aerobic exercise "sweet spot," where your body is utilizing aerobic metabolic pathways, building a strong heart, and burning primarily fat as fuel.

So whether you're [walking](#), biking, running or Zumba-ing, if you're gasping for air, you're well above that aerobic threshold, and it's no wonder you hate to work out. If, on the other hand, you can carry on a comfortable conversation with your workout buddy (remember, the Pledge is only one sentence, but it's a doozy) you're probably just about right.

**Action Item:** This week, take a walk or a bike ride, and stage your own talk test. Try to recite the Pledge of Allegiance out loud while you work out, and determine the intensity level where reciting the pledge goes from easy to not so easy. That's your personal sweet spot for aerobic exercise.

(Image Credit: [Bradley Gordon](#))



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