

## IS IT OK TO SKIP THE COOL-DOWN AT THE GYM?

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Sweat-iquette: "Is it ok to skip the cooldown at the gym?"

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You've just finished the heart pumping portion of your favorite spinning class, cardio kickboxing workout, or boot camp session. One look around the room and sweat-covered exercisers are fleeing for the doors! Wait—scramming before the final cool down is not cool. Natania Goldberg, Advantage Trainer, Wellness Coach, and Certified Private Trainer-National Academy of Sports Medicine from *The Sports Club/LA* explains why the final minutes of a workout are important and beneficial, so don't skip them!

A proper brief period of low intensity work following your workout will help...

1. **Re-Focus Your Mind:** A proper cooldown reduces the level of adrenaline in the blood, allowing the heart rate and your mind to return to its resting state. Walking while focusing on your diaphragmatic breaths (deep breaths from your belly) is a great way to cool down the body and refocus your mind while you prepare to head out the door and start or end your day.
2. **Avoid Dizziness:** Blood tends to pool in your legs immediately after a high-intensity to moderate workout. An increase in blood flowing to the lower extremities means a decrease in the blood returning to the heart. The results: dizziness and lightheadedness. To avoid this perform a brief period of low-intensity movements to help return the blood back to the heart.
3. **Improve Flexibility and Range of Motion:** Your body is at a higher temperature following a workout, making it the perfect time to stretch. Cool down with static stretches that hold the muscle in a stretched position for 20-30 seconds. This will allow the muscles to relax, lengthen, and improve range of motion after your workout.
4. **Reduce Soreness:** Cooling down helps with the removal of lactic acid, which can reduce the potential for delayed onset muscle soreness (when you feel the workout 1-2 days after the workout). You'll gain the biggest results when you allow your body to recover and repair after a workout.
5. **Keeps the Gym Clean:** Don't flee without grabbing the cleaner and wiping off the equipment, mats, medicine ball, etc. that you used during your sweat-session.

