



Decreasing sprint duration from 20 to 10 s during reduced-exertion high-intensity interval training (REHIT) attenuates the increase in maximal aerobic capacity but has no effect on affective and perceptual responses

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1 **Decreasing sprint duration from 20 to 10 s during reduced-exertion high-intensity interval training**
2 **(REHIT) attenuates the increase in maximal aerobic capacity but has no effect on affective and**
3 **perceptual responses**

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27 **ABSTRACT**

28

29 **Purpose:** Recent studies have demonstrated that modifying the 'classic' 6x30-s 'all-out' sprint
30 interval training (SIT) protocol by incorporating either shorter sprints (6x10-s or 15-s sprints) or
31 fewer sprints (e.g. 2x20-s sprints; reduced-exertion high-intensity interval training (REHIT)) does not
32 attenuate the training-induced improvements in maximal aerobic capacity ($\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$). The aim of the
33 present study was to determine whether reducing the sprint duration in the REHIT protocol from 20
34 s to 10 s per sprint influences acute affective responses and the change in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ following training.

35 **Methods:** Thirty-six sedentary or recreationally active participants (17 women; mean \pm SD age: 22 \pm 3
36 y, BMI: 24.5 \pm 4.6 kg \cdot m⁻², $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$: 37 \pm 8 mL \cdot kg⁻¹ \cdot min⁻¹) were randomised to a group performing a
37 'standard' REHIT protocol involving 2x20-s sprints or a group who performed 2x10-s sprints. $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$
38 was determined before and after 6 weeks of 3 weekly training sessions. Acute affective responses
39 and perceived exertion were assessed during training.

40 **Results:** Greater increases in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ were observed for the group performing 20-s sprints
41 (2.77 \pm 0.75 to 3.04 \pm 0.75 L \cdot min⁻¹; +10%) compared to the group performing 10-s sprints (2.58 \pm 0.57 vs.
42 2.67 \pm 3.04 L \cdot min⁻¹; +4%; group \times time interaction effect: $p < 0.05$; $d = 1.06$). Positive affect and the mood
43 state vigour increased post-exercise, while tension, depression and total mood disturbance
44 decreased, and negative affect remained unchanged. Affective responses and perceived exertion
45 were not altered by training and were not different between groups.

46 **Conclusion:** Reducing sprint duration in the REHIT protocol from 20 s to 10 s attenuates
47 improvements in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, and does not result in more positive affective responses or lower
48 perceived exertion.

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51 **Key words:**52 $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$; sprint interval training; SIT; Wingate sprint; affect

53

54 **Abbreviations:**

55 ANOVA: analysis of variance; BMI: body mass index; BRUMS: Brunel mood scale; HIIT: high-intensity
56 interval training; IPAQ: International Physical Activity Questionnaire; MICT: moderate-intensity
57 continuous training; PANAS: positive and negative affect schedule; PAR-Q: physical activity readiness
58 questionnaire; RCT: randomised controlled trial; REHIT: reduced-exertion high-intensity interval
59 training; RPE: rating of perceived exertion; SIT: sprint interval training; TMD: total mood disturbance;
60 $\dot{V}O_2$ max: maximal aerobic capacity

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61 **INTRODUCTION**

62 Low maximal aerobic capacity ($\dot{V}O_{2\max}$) is one of the strongest predictors of future chronic disease
63 and premature mortality (Keteyian et al. 2008; Myers et al. 2002), and longitudinal studies have
64 demonstrated that increasing $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ substantially lowers morbidity and mortality during follow up
65 (Blair et al. 1995; Lee et al. 2011). Thus physical activity and/or exercise interventions that improve
66 $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ should be emphasised in public health guidelines (Bouchard et al. 2015; Ross et al. 2016).
67 $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ can be improved through moderate-intensity continuous training (MICT) (Garber et al.
68 2011), but as perceived lack of time prevents many people from doing such exercise (Kimm et al.
69 2006; Korhonen et al. 2009; Trost et al. 2002), alternative exercise routines such as (sub)maximal
70 high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and supramaximal sprint interval training (SIT) have been
71 proposed as time-efficient alternative/adjunct exercise strategies (Gillen and Gibala 2014). However,
72 the need for recovery periods in between repeated sprints diminishes the time-efficiency of most
73 HIIT and SIT protocols compared to less strenuous MICT (Gillen and Gibala 2014).

74 The mechanisms which underpin the increases in $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ with HIIT and SIT remain unclear (Vollaard
75 and Metcalfe 2017), but have been proposed to rely on activation of skeletal muscle signalling
76 pathways involving 5' adenosine monophosphate-activated protein kinase (AMPK), peroxisome
77 proliferator-activated receptor gamma coactivator 1-alpha (PGC-1 α) (Gibala 2009), and potentially
78 other signalling molecules such as p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase (p38 MAPK) (Little et al.
79 2011), sirtuin 1 (SIRT1) (Guerra et al. 2010) and sirtuin 3 (SIRT3) (Edgett et al. 2016). It has been
80 proposed that the activation of relevant signalling pathways with supramaximal exercise may be
81 reliant on achieving peak power output (Hazell et al. 2010), but we have proposed an alternative
82 theory suggesting that activation of signalling pathways could plausibly be related to rapid
83 glycogenolysis associated with supramaximal exercise (Metcalfe et al. 2015). As glycogen depletion
84 during supramaximal exercise is limited to the first ~15 s of the first bouts of repeated 'all-out'
85 sprints (Parolin et al. 1999), we have previously proposed that more time-efficient SIT protocols with
86 fewer and/or shorter sprints may remain effective at improving $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ (Metcalfe et al. 2012;

87 Vollaard and Metcalfe 2017). In recent years we have provided support for this hypothesis by
88 demonstrating that a reduced-exertion high-intensity interval training (REHIT) protocol involving two
89 20-s all-out cycle sprints within a 10-min exercise session improves $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ in sedentary individuals
90 (Metcalfe et al. 2012; Metcalfe et al. 2016) and patients with type 2 diabetes (Ruffino et al. 2017).
91 Furthermore, REHIT may improve measures of insulin sensitivity (Gillen et al. 2016; Gillen et al. 2014;
92 Metcalfe et al. 2012) and blood pressure (Ruffino et al. 2017). With a total time-commitment of 3 x
93 10 min per week, the REHIT protocol appears to offer a genuinely time-efficient alternative to MICT
94 (Vollaard and Metcalfe 2017; Vollaard et al. 2017).

95 The sprints in the REHIT protocol are shorter (20 s) compared to those used in most other SIT
96 protocols (30 s). This shortened sprint duration, and the concomitant lower increase in muscle
97 metabolites (e.g. lactate, hydrogen ions) and reduction in central motor command can be expected
98 to reduce perceived exertion (Pageaux 2016; Vollaard and Metcalfe 2017). The strong contribution
99 of phosphocreatine hydrolysis to energy demands during the first ~10 s of a 30-s Wingate sprint
100 means that perceived exertion during this phase is relatively low, whereas the gradual switch to
101 glycolysis as the predominant energy source (Parolin et al. 1999) is associated with severe and
102 progressive fatigue during the latter stages of the sprint. It follows that if sprint duration in the REHIT
103 protocol can be reduced further without affecting the associated improvements in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, the
104 protocol would be perceived as less unpleasant and more tolerable. Recent findings by Townsend et
105 al. (2017) suggest that reducing sprint duration may attenuate negative affective responses to SIT.
106 This in turn could potentially lead to better uptake of, and adherence to, SIT as a viable alternative
107 exercise intervention for reducing risk of noncommunicable disease (Rhodes and Kates 2015).

108 To date there has been little focus on the effects of sprint duration in SIT protocols on associated
109 adaptations to $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$. Hazell and co-workers (2010) suggested that generation of peak power may
110 be more important as a mechanism for improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ than the maintenance of a high power
111 output for a longer duration. Indeed, they observed no difference in the increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$
112 between SIT protocols incorporating either 4-6 x 30-s or 10-s sprints (Hazell et al. 2010). This was

113 supported by Zelt et al. (2014) who found similar increases in $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ with 4-6 x 30-s or 15-s sprints.
114 Therefore, the present study aimed to determine whether reducing the sprint duration in the REHIT
115 protocol from 20 s to 10 s per sprint affects the associated change in $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ as well as ratings of
116 perceived exertion and changes in affect and mood state.

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117 METHODS**118 Compliance with Ethical Standards**

119 The study was approved by the local University Ethics committees (references: SSREC 888/ FC52
120 2016-17/ 16-8.1/18), and conformed to the standards set forth in the latest revision of the
121 Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was fully explained to all participants in written and
122 verbal form before they were asked to provide written consent.

123 Participants

124 Thirty-six apparently healthy, sedentary or recreationally active participants (**Table 1**) were recruited
125 at sites in the UK (Stirling, Derry/Londonderry) and Turkey (İzmir), and randomised into a group
126 performing the REHIT protocol as previously described by Metcalfe et al. (2012) (REHIT20; n=18, 11
127 men) and a group performing the same protocol but with the sprint duration reduced by 50% for
128 each session (REHIT10; n=18, 8 men). Randomisation was performed using the sealed envelope
129 method. Exclusion criteria were classification as highly physically active according to the
130 International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ (Craig et al. 2003)), contraindications to exercise
131 as determined using a standard physical activity readiness questionnaire (PAR-Q (Thomas et al.
132 1992)), clinically significant hypertension (>140/90 mm Hg), or resting heart rate ≥ 100 beats \cdot min⁻¹.
133 All participants were asked not to make conscious changes to their diet and physical activity patterns
134 for the duration of the study.

135 Experimental Procedures

136 Following measurement of body mass and height, $\dot{V}O_2$ max was determined using an incremental
137 cycling test to exhaustion (Excalibur Sport, Lode, Groningen, the Netherlands), with breath-by-
138 breath measurement of oxygen uptake using a calibrated online gas analyser (Oxycon Pro, Jaeger,
139 Wurzburg, Germany; Quark C-PET, Cosmed, Rome, Italy; CV: 4%). Participants were asked not to
140 perform strenuous exercise or consume caffeine or alcohol the day before and prior to the test, and
141 to drink half a litre of water the morning of the testing day. After a 2-min warm-up at 50 W the

142 intensity was increased by 1 W every 3 s until volitional exhaustion (failure to maintain rpm >50)
143 despite verbal encouragement. $\dot{V}O_2$ max was determined as the highest value for a 15-breath rolling
144 average, and accepted if two or more of the following criteria were met: 1) volitional exhaustion, 2)
145 a plateau in $\dot{V}O_2$ despite increasing intensity, 3) RER>1.15, and 4) maximal heart rate within 10 beats
146 of the age-predicted maximum (i.e. 220 - age). This was the case for all participants. Because of
147 technical difficulties we were unable to complete the post-training $\dot{V}O_2$ max test for one female
148 participant in the REHIT20 group, so $\dot{V}O_2$ max data are presented for 11 men and 6 women for this
149 group.

150 Following the $\dot{V}O_2$ max test, participants performed a 6-week training programme involving 3 training
151 sessions per week. Training sessions consisted of 10 min of unloaded pedalling (Ergonomic 874e,
152 Monark, Vansbro, Sweden), with two all-out cycle sprints against a resistance of 7.5% of the
153 participant's body weight. The first sprint started at 2 min and the second sprint finished at 6 min.
154 Sprint duration in the REHIT20 group increased from 10 s in the first 3 sessions, to 15 s in sessions 4-
155 6, and 20 s in all remaining sessions. Sprint duration in the REHIT10 group was exactly half that of
156 the REHIT20 group in all sessions: duration increased from 5 s in the first 3 sessions, to 7.5 s in
157 sessions 4-6, and 10 s in all remaining sessions. Participants were asked to increase their cadence to
158 maximal ~ 3 s prior to the start of the sprint and to maintain the highest possible cadence throughout
159 the sprint. Verbal encouragement was provided. A session rating of perceived exertion (RPE) score
160 using the 6-20 Borg scale (representing the entire training session (Borg 1982)) was taken directly
161 post-exercise at the last session of each training week. In addition, during the first, fourth, seventh
162 and eighteenth training session, the changes in psychological affect as a result of exercise were
163 assessed using the positive and negative affect scale (PANAS (Watson et al. 1988)) and the Brunel
164 Mood Scale (BRUMS (Terry et al. 1999)). These scales were completed before and within 5 min after
165 the exercise session. Following the final training session, participants completed a questionnaire on
166 the acceptability of the intervention, as previously used by Boereboom et al. (2016). A second

167 $\dot{V}O_2$ max test was performed on the third day after the final training session, at a similar time as the
168 baseline test and following identical procedures.

169 **Statistical analysis**

170 Data are presented as mean \pm SD. Based on a coefficient of variation for the $\dot{V}O_2$ max test protocol of
171 4% (Songsorn et al. 2016), it was calculated that 14 participants were needed in each group to be
172 able to detect a difference in the change in $\dot{V}O_2$ max of 5% between the two groups, with a power of
173 90% and $\alpha=0.05$. Independent sample t-tests were used to determine differences between the two
174 groups at baseline. Two-way mixed model ANOVA (intervention [REHIT10 / REHIT20] \times trial [pre-
175 training / post-training]) was used to determine differences in the change in $\dot{V}O_2$ max and body mass
176 from baseline to post-intervention between the two groups. Three-way repeated measures ANOVA
177 (intervention [REHIT10 / REHIT20] \times training session [session 1 / 4 / 7 / 18] \times time [pre-exercise /
178 post-exercise]) was used to assess the effect of acute exercise on affect and mood state, and two-
179 way repeated measures ANOVA (intervention [REHIT10 / REHIT20] \times training session [session 3 / 6 /
180 9 / 12 / 15 / 18]) was used to assess the effect of acute exercise on perceived exertion. A Mann-
181 Whitney U test was used to test for differences between the groups for intervention acceptability.
182 Cohen's *d* effect sizes are reported. Significance was accepted at $p<0.05$.

183 **RESULTS**

184 There were no significant differences between participants in the control group and the training
185 group for mean baseline characteristics (**Table 1**) or other variables. Of the 36 participants, 23
186 completed all 18 training sessions, 7 completed 17 sessions, and 6 completed 16 sessions, resulting
187 in an overall mean adherence of 97% (98% for REHIT10 and 96% for REHIT20). We observed a small
188 but significant increase in body mass from pre- to post-intervention (main effect of time: $p<0.05$),
189 but no difference between the change in the REHIT20 group (70.3 ± 11.5 vs. 71.2 ± 11.0 kg) compared
190 to the REHIT10 group (75.8 ± 18.7 vs. 76.2 ± 18.8 kg). There was a greater increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ in the
191 REHIT20 group (2.77 ± 0.75 vs. 3.04 ± 0.75 L \cdot min $^{-1}$; +10%) compared to the REHIT10 group (2.58 ± 0.57
192 vs. 2.67 ± 3.04 L \cdot min $^{-1}$; +4%; group \times time interaction effect: $P<0.05$; $d=1.06$; main effect of time:
193 $p<0.001$; **Figure 1**).

194 Acute REHIT sessions were associated with a small but significant increase in positive affect directly
195 post-exercise (main effect of time: $p<0.05$; $d=0.23$), whereas negative affect was unchanged (**Table**
196 **2**). There were no significant time \times session interaction effects for affect, and no significant
197 differences were observed between the changes in the REHIT10 and REHIT20 groups. Significant
198 exercise-induced improvements with small effect sizes ($d=0.11$ - 0.21) were observed for the mood
199 states tension, depression, vigour (main effect of time: $p<0.01$ for each) and total mood disturbance
200 (main effect of time: $p<0.05$), but there were no significant changes for anger, fatigue, or confusion
201 (**Figure 2**). Again, no differences were observed between training sessions, nor between the REHIT10
202 and REHIT20 groups. Ratings of perceived exertion scores averaged between ~ 13 - 15 ('somewhat
203 hard' to 'hard'), with no significant differences between the groups or between training sessions
204 (**Figure 3**). Following the final training session, both REHIT programmes were deemed acceptable by
205 the majority of participants (**Figure 4**), with no significant differences between the protocols.
206 Specifically, on average participants in both groups agreed with the statements that they believed
207 that their fitness had improved, that they would do HIT again, that they would recommend HIT to
208 others, and that they enjoyed HIT. They were neutral about the statement that HIT was more

209 demanding than expected, and on average disagreed with the statements that the physical strain or
210 travelling involved with HIT interfered with their life, and that HIT was a time burden.

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211 **DISCUSSION**

212 The present study aimed to determine whether a REHIT protocol with 10-s sprints could be equally
213 effective at improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ compared to a protocol involving 20-s sprints. Unlike previous studies
214 that found no difference in the increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ between 2-4 weeks of 4-6 x 30-s sprints vs. 10
215 (Hazell et al. 2010) or 15-s sprints (Zelt et al. 2014), we observed significantly greater improvements
216 in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ with 2 x 20-s vs. 2 x 10-s sprints. As acute affective responses and perceived exertion
217 were not affected by sprint duration, we conclude that in protocols with very few sprints the sprint
218 duration should be longer than 10 s.

219 The increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ we observed in response to our original 2x20-s REHIT protocol is similar to
220 what we have reported in our previous studies (Metcalfe et al. 2012; Metcalfe et al. 2016). This
221 increase is important as low $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ is strongly linked to poor health and increased risk of
222 premature morbidity (Keteyian et al. 2008; Myers et al. 2002). As the prevalence of physical
223 inactivity remains high worldwide (Hallal et al. 2012), there is an urgent need to establish alternative
224 exercise interventions that are 1) effective at improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, and 2) acceptable to populations
225 that are currently unwilling or unable to adhere to recommended levels of MICT. In an attempt to
226 address the commonly reported barrier to exercise of perceived lack of time (Kimm et al. 2006;
227 Korkiakangas et al. 2009; Trost et al. 2002) we previously developed the genuinely time-efficient
228 REHIT intervention (Metcalfe et al. 2012). REHIT has a total time-commitment of 3 x 10 min per
229 week and is associated with acceptable session ratings of perceived exertion ('somewhat hard')
230 (Metcalfe et al. 2012). Nonetheless, there remains a need to establish whether the REHIT protocol
231 can be made shorter and/or easier in order to enhance the likelihood of sedentary populations
232 taking up and adhering to this exercise routine. We have recently provided preliminary data
233 suggesting that a minimum of two sprint repetitions within a training session is required in order to
234 improve $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ (Songsorn et al. 2016; Songsorn et al. 2017; Vollaard et al. 2017). Reducing the
235 sprint duration in the REHIT protocol would do little to reduce the total training time (the bulk of
236 each training session is spent on the low-intensity warm-up and recovery periods), but if the

237 resulting protocol remains effective at improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ it could be beneficial by reducing potential
238 negative affective responses or perceived exertion (Townsend et al. 2017). However, in the present
239 study we demonstrate that reducing the sprint duration from 20 s to 10 s attenuates the efficacy of
240 the REHIT protocol at improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, and we therefore propose that the original protocol
241 involving 20-s sprints remains the protocol of choice.

242 The exact physiological stimuli and molecular signalling pathways responsible for the rapid
243 improvements in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ associated with HIIT and SIT protocols remain unclear (Vollaard and
244 Metcalfe 2017). As long as this is the case, establishing the shortest and/or easiest exercise
245 interventions associated with health benefits such as improved $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ remains a matter of trial and
246 error, involving studies examining a variety of protocol modifications. Previous work by the groups
247 of Hazell (Hazell et al. 2010) and Gurd (Zelt et al. 2014) suggested that the sprint duration in SIT
248 protocols can be substantially reduced from that used in the 'classic' 4-6 x 30-s SIT protocol
249 popularised by Gibala's group (Burgomaster et al. 2005). On the basis of these results it was
250 suggested that generation of peak power is a key stimulus for improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$. Our present data
251 suggest that this is not the case, at least not when the number of sprint repetitions is kept low (2
252 repetitions). The evidence to date points to a need to repeat all-out sprints of a sufficient duration
253 (e.g. 2 x 20 s) or number (e.g. 4-6 x 10 s) to achieve clinically meaningful increases in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$. The
254 reasons why certain combinations of sprint repetitions and sprint duration lead to differences in the
255 effectiveness of the protocols in improving $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ will remain unclear until we have a more
256 detailed understanding of the mechanisms responsible for the increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ associated with
257 very low volume SIT protocols (Vollaard and Metcalfe 2017).

258 This is the first study to provide data on the acute effects of REHIT on affective responses and mood
259 state. We demonstrate that reducing the sprint duration in the REHIT protocol from 20 s to 10 s does
260 not reduce session ratings of perceived exertion, nor does it lead to more positive affective
261 responses or changes in mood state post-exercise. This is important, because a criticism of SIT
262 protocols has been that all-out sprints are too strenuous for untrained individuals: it has been

263 suggested that performing all-out sprints requires too much motivation (which many sedentary
264 populations lack), and is likely to evoke negative affect which may lead to subsequent avoidance of
265 further exercise (Hardcastle et al. 2014). However, the evidence on which this criticism is based is
266 contentious (Jung et al. 2015), and our data suggest that REHIT is not associated with the negative
267 affective responses described by Hardcastle et al. (2014).

268 Exercise interventions can only improve health if performed regularly, and therefore exercise
269 protocols leading to a smaller increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ could still be deemed acceptable if they were
270 substantially less strenuous and associated with less negative affect. However, we demonstrate that
271 acute exercise in a REHIT session is not associated with an increase in negative affect or a disruption
272 of mood state directly after exercise, and that neither reducing the sprint duration from 20 s to 10 s
273 nor regularly performing REHIT sessions (i.e. training) modifies the acute responses. Our finding that
274 REHIT does not result in negative affect directly post-exercise is in contrast to longer SIT protocols
275 with more sprints (Townsend et al. 2017). Conversely it is in line with Townsend's finding that
276 shorter and, if sprint duration is kept constant, fewer sprints have less of an impact on affective
277 responses. Nonetheless, our data should be interpreted with caution given that affective responses
278 and changes in mood state were only assessed on completion of the exercise session, i.e. ~5 min
279 following the second sprint. Previous studies which have applied continuous exercise have shown
280 that affective responses to exercise above the ventilatory threshold follow an inverse U-shaped
281 curve: affect decreases (and may become negative) during exercise, but then rebounds quickly upon
282 exercise cessation and mood state may then be enhanced in the immediate post-exercise period
283 (Ekkekakis et al. 2008). Future studies should determine whether negative affect is present at any
284 point during the 10-min exercise session. Still, that REHIT may be associated with positive affective
285 responses immediately post-exercise is in direct contrast to classic SIT (4-6 x 30-s sprints) (Saanijski
286 et al. 2015) and at the very least suggests that any potential negative responses will be short-lived.

287 In conclusion, our present study shows that reducing the sprint duration in the REHIT protocol from
288 2 x 20 s to 2 x 10 s attenuates improvements in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, but does not impact perceived exertion,

289 acute affective responses or mood state. Our findings further support the use of the original REHIT
290 protocol consisting of 2 x 20-s sprints, and strengthens our contention that REHIT represents an
291 efficacious, time-efficient, and acceptable alternative to classic SIT and MICT for improving health
292 and reducing risk of future morbidity and premature mortality.

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298

299 **Conflict of interest**

300 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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448 **Table 1** participant characteristics

	REHIT10 (n=18)	REHIT20 (n=18)
Sex (male / female)	8 / 10	11 / 7
Age (y)	22±4	22±2
BMI (kg·m ⁻²)	25.3±5.9	23.8±24.1
Baseline $\dot{V}O_2$ max (mL·kg ⁻¹ ·min ⁻¹)	34±9	39±7
Physical activity level (MET·min·week ⁻¹)	911±739	981±769

449 *Values shown are means±SD. Physical activity level was determined using the IPAQ.*

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450 **Table 2** Effects of REHIT10 and REHIT20 on positive and negative affect

	Positive affect				Negative affect			
	REHIT10		REHIT20		REHIT10		REHIT20	
	Pre-exercise	Post-exercise	Pre-exercise	Post-exercise	Pre-exercise	Post-exercise	Pre-exercise	Post-exercise
Session 1	24±7	26±7	22±7	22±6	15±4	16±6	14±3	13±4
Session 4	22±6	26±7	19±7	19±7	15±4	15±5	13±5	13±5
Session 7	23±6	25±6	19±8	20±10	15±5	15±5	13±3	13±4
Session 18	25±6	26±8	20±9	21±9	15±5	16±5	14±5	14±5

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Figure 1 Changes in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ in response to 6 weeks of REHIT10 and REHIT20. The mean 10% increase in $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$ following REHIT20 was significantly higher than the 4% increase following REHIT10 ($p<0.05$).

Figure 2 Effects of REHIT10 and REHIT20 on mood state as determined using the Brunel Mood Scale (BRUMS). As no main or interaction effects of training session were observed, values for training sessions 1, 4, 7, and 18 were averaged. Values shown are means \pm SD. TMD: total mood disturbance. Main effects of time: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$.

Figure 3 Rating of perceived exertion (RPE) as taken at the end of the last training session of each week. Participants were asked to rate the 10-min training sessions as a whole. No significant differences were observed between REHIT10 and REHIT20, nor between the training sessions.

Figure 4 Acceptability of REHIT. Acceptability was assessed using a modified questionnaire as used by Boereboom et al. (2016). Answers were given on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - strongly agree to 5 - strongly disagree. No significant differences in the mean responses were observed between REHIT10 and REHIT20.

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