

## ***35, 45 or Older – The Surprising Effects of Blood Pressure in Fitness Training***

As most of us know, high blood pressure is one of the leading killers of adults of any age or sex. Stress, smoking, lack of exercise, excessive drinking, diet, lack of sleep and obesity are the typical factors we think of as contributing to high blood pressure. However, few weekend warriors over 35 have probably ever thought about the effects of cross-fit or weight training and breathing on blood pressure.

Since breaking a Guinness World Record in 2011, my training has focused on speed and endurance, and leg and back training. Squats, deadlifts, lunges, pull throughs, etc. have become my best friends.

About two months ago, at a body weight of 170 lbs. I was in the gym on my speed day. The focus of that day's plan was completing 10 sets of 10 conventional deadlifts in 15 seconds with 2-minute breaks at a progressively heavier load.

I was off and away, 10 reps in 15 second at 135, 225, 245, 265, 285, and 305 and 3 sets of 10 at 315 lb. The last set and all breaks were done in 21 minutes and 50 seconds, cool!

Muscle wise, I got the weight in my planned time. Unfortunately, I hadn't considered the cumulative effect of blood pressure and breathing in speed work under a progressively heavier load. The result was my 10th set of 10 reps at 315 in 15 seconds immediately followed by 6 to 10 seconds of blurred vision!

While not specifically thinking about blood pressure I wanted ensure there weren't problems I wasn't aware of. So over the next month I had, and passed an EKG, echo cardiogram, stress test and blood work. However, that didn't negate the new respect I was gaining for the cumulative effects of blood pressure due to breathing under progressive loading in intense interval training!

After investigating further, I found research from the Mayo Clinic and the American Journal of Epidemiology - Oxford Journal.

In short, most studies show an inverse relationship between resting blood pressure and usual fitness levels. The inference is that exercise lowers blood pressure. Surprisingly however, some studies now show that maximum oxygen uptake during exercise decreases with age; this results in fitness and particularly "high intensity fitness" having a strong effect on blood pressure as we get older. Translated, this data indicates that the "perceived positive" relationship between fitness and blood pressure can result in negative effects if you over do it as you age i.e. blurry vision after progressive speed weight training.

Over 35, be safe and monitor your blood pressure and consider your breathing during high intensity cross fit or weight training!

*Walter is currently training to attempt breaking two new Guinness World Records in 2012 For more information on Walter visit [www.walterurban.com](http://www.walterurban.com)*