

THE **CARDIO** CHALLENGE

THIS MONTH'S GOAL: **a 20-minute workout, three times a week**

If you've read *SELF* for more than 10 minutes, you already know why cardiovascular (aka aerobic) exercise is so important. Regular cardio workouts keep your heart and lungs in prime condition and your energy level and metabolism high. Women who put in consistent cardio time sleep more deeply, deal with stress better and have stronger immune systems as well as lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels than those who don't. They're also leaner and have stronger bones.

So head outside and walk, run, bike, skate, hike, row or swim. Get to the gym and onto a stairclimber, treadmill or elliptical trainer. Try an aerobics, dance or boxing class. Whatever you choose, you must be moving continuously for at least 20 minutes. Stop-and-start activities like softball are good exercise, but no substitute.

To make your workouts count, you must do them on three separate days. A one-hour hike on Sunday doesn't get you off the hook for the rest of the week—you'll still have two workouts to go. Soon you'll be looking forward to your daily dose. Trust us.

Top, DKNY Active. Shorts, Dellina. Pads and in-line skates, Rollerblade. Helmet, Bell.

