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TISSUE OXYGENATION AND MITOCHONDRIAL RESPIRATION UNDER DIFFERENT MODES OF INTERMITTENT HYPOXIA

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**TISSUE OXYGENATION AND MITOCHONDRIAL RESPIRATION UNDER
DIFFERENT MODES OF INTERMITTENT HYPOXIA**

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Running title: Intermittent Hypoxia Modes

Abstract

We compared the results of 5 modes of intermittent hypoxia training (IHT) on gastrocnemius muscle PO_2 and heart and liver mitochondrial respiration in rats. Minutes of hypoxia, % O_2 and recovery minutes on air in each mode were: 1) 5, 12%, 5; 2) 15, 12%, 15; 3) 5, 12% 15; 4) 5, 7% 5; 5) 5, 7%, 15. Mode 1 proved best in that PmO_2 dropped minimally at the end of every hypoxic bout and recovered quickly after each bout. One, 2 and 3 week IHT in mode 1 each increased tissue PO_2 in both normoxic and 30 min severe hypoxic (7% O_2) tests. Adaptation to IHT in Mode 1 caused the substrate dependent reorganization of liver and heart mitochondrial energy metabolism favoring NADH-dependent oxidation and improving the efficiency of oxidative phosphorylation. Mitochondrial adaptation occurred after 14 days of IHT in liver tissue but after 21 days in myocardium, and was preserved during the three months following IHT termination. When using Mode 2, positive changes were also registered, but were less pronounced. Other IHT modes provoked negative effects on PmO_2 level both during hypoxic periods and reoxygenation. In conclusion, the most effective IHT regimen is 5 min 12% O_2 with 5 min breaks, five cycles per day during two or three weeks depending on the task of IHT.

Key words: *intermittent hypoxia, rat tissue oxygenation, mitochondrial respiration*

Introduction

Widespread use of the intermittent hypoxic training/treatment (IHT) methods in sports, military and medical practice during recent decades has provoked discussion about the most beneficial regimens of hypoxic training, both normobaric and hypobaric. Traditional normobaric treatment protocols elaborated mostly by scientists from Eastern Europe comprise alternating periods of breathing with hypoxic gas mixtures followed by a subsequent oxygenation periods (breathing with ambient air). Many types of protocol with different numbers of hypoxia episodes, severity, and total exposure duration have been used by investigators and these combinations may have resulted in various physiological responses. Principals of IHT application for cell cultures, animal experiments (mice, dogs, cats, rabbits, pigs, horses and even insects) have been elaborated. A variety of technical implementations for treatment of humans have been tested and used in recent decades, including hypobaric chambers, normobaric reduced oxygen rooms, and mask-system hypoxicators producing hypoxic air in various ways [see reviews Serebrovskaya et al., 2003; Zieliński, 2005; Mateika & Sandhu, 2011; Lopata & Serebrovskaya, 2012].

On the other hand, the intermittent hypoxia research in Western Europe and North America was primarily focused on the detrimental effects of chronic intermittent hypoxia associated with sleep-disorder breathing. For instance, Prabhakar & Semenza [2012] consider that intermittent hypoxia almost always represents a pathological stimulus that evokes maladaptive responses. However, during the past decade, such a gap of division between East and West is progressively shrinking, and mutual understanding on what “intermittent hypoxia” means, becomes clearer [Serebrovskaya & Xie, 2009; Semenza, 2012].

The questions that arise are, what are the key mechanisms determining the adaptive versus maladaptive nature of different paradigms of intermittent hypoxia, and, what molecular pathways are mediating the observed pathological or physiological response? It is appropriate to mention here the ancient wisdom well expressed by Paracelsus in the XVIth century: "Sola dosis facit venenum" (only the dose makes the poison).

Until now there is no exact evidence about the precise mechanism for switching adaptive or maladaptive responses to hypoxic impact. Several attempts were undertaken to analyze this question [Lukyanova, 2005; Serebrovskaya et al, 2008; Lukyanova et al, 2009, 2012; Yin et al., 2012]. The most significant contribution to this question was made by Prabhakar & Semenza [2012], who described transcriptional regulation of gene expression mediated by hypoxia-inducible factors 1 and 2 (HIF-1 and HIF-2). These factors constitute important components of the genetic makeup in the body, influencing hypoxic sensing by regulating intracellular redox state via transcriptional regulation of pro-and anti-oxidant enzymes. The

1 large number of known feedback loops underscores the critical importance of precisely
2 regulating O₂ delivery and utilization. The Authors basic message is that HIF signaling is not
3 a linear pathway, but a complex web with perhaps hundreds of input stimuli and thousands of
4 potential output responses, with each representing a different target gene. The discovery of
5 the HIF family has led to novel insights into the molecular basis of adaptive and maladaptive
6 cellular and systemic responses to continuous and intermittent hypoxia.
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10 While these fundamental molecular studies on cell culture models provided important
11 insights into mechanisms of HIF activation by hypoxia, they can not answer as yet, the
12 practical question of what dose and regimen of hypoxic impact could be mostly beneficial for
13 animals and humans. In practice, hypoxic regimens that are used for the study of hypoxic
14 adaptations vary broadly from 3-12 short hypoxic sessions (2-10 min) with 2-20 min
15 normoxic breaks during 7-30 days to hypoxic influences lasting from 1 - 12 hours during 2-90
16 days [Nattie et al., 1978; McGuire & Bradford, 2001; Fagan, 2001; Lin et al., 2002; Neckár
17 et al, 2002; Zong et al., 2004; Zhu et al, 2004; Vavilova et al., 2005; Joyeux-Eaure et al.,
18 2005; Naryzhnaia et al., 2009; Manukhina et al., 2011; Rozova et al., 2012, and many others].
19

20 This wide spectrum of protocols for IHT is represented now in literature showing both
21 beneficial and detrimental effects. In addition, simply the mode of hypoxic influence (depth,
22 duration, and intermittence) appeared to be critical for the determination of healing or harmful
23 result. Therefore, special purposeful investigations are needed to elucidate basic mechanisms
24 of different IHT effects depending on the modality of hypoxic stimuli and elaborate most
25 effective and safe regimen for the introduction in human practice.
26

27 The two most informative parameters of hypoxic influence on an organism are tissue
28 oxygenation and tissue respiration. At the tissue level, hypoxia activates the transcription of
29 multiple genes encoding angiogenic growth factors and cytokines. The result is an increase in
30 the capillary density and tissue perfusion [Mankovska et al., 2005; Panisello et al., 2008; Xu
31 WQ et al., 2011; Faiss et al., 2013], that **increases** in tissue oxygenation. At the cellular level,
32 hypoxia leads to reprogramming of mitochondrial metabolism that ensures adequate ATP
33 generation and prevents adverse consequences of excess mitochondrial ROS generation.
34 These metabolic adaptations are due to HIF-1-mediated transcriptional regulation of
35 glycolytic enzymes, mitochondrial electron transport chain components, and other metabolic
36 enzymes [Prabhakar & Semenza, 2012]. Many studies confirm the close relations between
37 physical performance and mitochondrial respiration during adaptation to intermittent hypoxia
38 [Zoll et al., 2002; Mankovska et al., 2005; Saxena et al., 2012, and many others].
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40 Based on the above summary of current knowledge, the aim of this study was to compare
41 the effects of the five most widespread modes of hypoxic training on rat muscle pO₂ and
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1 elucidate how the most beneficial modes influence mitochondrial respiration. We tested two
2 hypoxic loads (breathing with 12% O₂ and 7% O₂) under different durations of hypoxic and
3 normoxic periods in various combinations of 5 minute and 15 minutes.
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9 **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

10 **Animals**

11 All procedures followed the criteria, technical standards and rights applied to animal
12 research. All trials were followed in accordance with the statements of the European Union
13 regarding handling of experimental animals. This investigation conforms to the law and local
14 ethical committee guidelines for animal research. Experiments were conducted on adult male
15 Wistar rats (weight range 200 to 220 gram). The animals were housed (4 per cage) in a room
16 with 12:12-h light-dark cycle at 22°C and were provided with standard rat chow with water
17 ad libitum.
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28 **Experimental design**

29 Two series of experiments were provided. In Series I, muscle oxygen partial pressure
30 (PmO₂) was recorded in *m. gastrocnemius* at the end of each of 6 hypoxic and end of each
31 recovery period in each of the 5 modes during one day study. Then, the IHT in Mode 1 was
32 administrated to animals for 3 weeks, and PmO₂ was recorded in both normoxic and 30 min
33 severe hypoxic (7% O₂) tests after 7, 14 and 21 days of IHT as well as at 2 and 3 months post-
34 training.
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45 In Series II the investigation of liver and myocardium mitochondrial respiration was
46 completed after a course of the two most beneficial IHT modes. In total, 91 animals were used
47 in the study.
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51 **Series I: Measurements of Muscle PO₂**

52 Each of the 5 modes was studied in a separate group of animals consisting of 7 rats.
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54 Each rat was exposed 6 times to the chosen mode during one test day (see table 1). Animals
55 of Gr. I-1 were furthermore subjected to three-week IHT in Mode 1, and PmO₂ was recorded
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1 before and at end of the severe hypoxia test (7% O₂ for 30 min) on days 7, 14, 21 and 2 and 3
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4 months after finishing IHT.

6 **Protocol**

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8 All manipulations were made under light etherization. Animals were fixed in supine
9 position. Rats breathed through a two-valve respiratory mask which could feed gas mixtures
10 directly to the nostrils, thus minimizing the dead space. A mask covered the animals' eyes
11 protecting them from outside irritants. Investigations included PmO₂ continuous measurement
12 during air breathing, inhalation of hypoxic gas mixtures according to prescribed modes or
13 during a single AH test.
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22 To determine PmO₂, the sterile open vitrified needle-shaped 0.2 mm diameter platinum
23 electrode (chemical purity 99, 99%) was introduced through a skin puncture lengthwise
24 approximately 10-15 mm along the inside of the muscle fibers [Berezovskii, 1975].
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26 Polarographic measurements began after 5-10 minutes when the relatively stable PmO₂ values
27 were attained. The oxygen electrode was calibrated before and after measurements in each
28 animal.
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35 **Series II: Study of mitochondrial respiration.**

36 **Animal groups**

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38 Eight groups of rats, each group with 7 animals, participated in this series. Among
39 them, group II-1 was the control group, exposed to a sham IHT, and five groups (Gr.II: 2-6)
40 were exposed to IHT courses of different durations, Mode 1:
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47 Gr.II-1 – control group;

48 Gr.II-2 – IHT during 7 days;

49 Gr.II-3 – IHT during 14 days;

50 Gr.II-4 – IHT during 21 days;

51 Gr.II-5 – 2 month residence in vivarium after three-week IHT;

Gr.II-6 – 3 month residence in vivarium after three-week IHT.

Gr.II-7 had sham treatment with IHT, Mode 2 (control group), and Gr.II-8 underwent to three-week IHT in Mode 2.

IHT Protocol

Rats underwent the IHT sessions in two gaseous chambers: hypoxic (ventilated by hypoxic gaseous mixture with 12 % O₂) and normoxic (ventilated by ambient air). Animals were placed inside a chamber in a metal cage which could be quickly moved from the air chamber and placed into the hypoxic chamber (there and back) every five or fifteen minutes depending on the IHT mode. This procedure was repeated 5 times daily during 7, 14 or 21 days depending on group number. The level of O₂ fraction in the hypoxic chamber was monitored by a gas analyzer.

Mitochondrial respiration protocol

Next day after the last hypoxic exposure, rats were anesthetized with 1–2% isoflurane, decapitated, and their livers and hearts were extracted for further analysis of mitochondrial respiration. Mitochondria were isolated by differential centrifugation according to Kondrashova et al. [2001]. Briefly, rat hearts and livers were quickly excised, washed in ice-cold buffer, weighed, and homogenized in a glass Potter-Elvehjem homogenizer with a motor-drive Teflon pestle. The homogenization medium contained for heart: 120 mM KCl, 10 mM HEPES, 10 mM EDTA, and 0.5% bovine serum albumin; pH 7.2; for liver: 120 mM KCl, 2 mM K₂CO₃, 10 mM Tris HCl, 1 mM EGTA; pH 7.2. Homogenate was centrifugated during 7 min at 700 G and 4⁰C, then supernatant was centrifugated during 15 min at 11000 G and 4⁰C. Mitochondrial suspension (3-4 mg protein/ml) was slurred in a medium without EDTA and kept on ice at 4⁰C.

Mitochondrial respiratory function was measured in a water-jacketed chamber using a Clark O₂ electrode by the polarographic method of Chance and Williams [1956].

Mitochondria were added to the thermostated and magnetically stirred respiration chamber containing a total volume of 1.0 ml of respiration medium. Medium composition: for heart - 30 mM tris-HCl, 125 mM KCl, 10 mM NaCl, 5 mM KH_2PO_4 , 1.5 mM MgCl_2 , and 3 mM EGTA; for liver - 120 mM KCl, 2 mM KH_2PO_4 , 2 mM K_2CO_3 , 10 mM TrisHCl, pH 7.2 at 25°C. Following oxidative substrates were used: 1 mM succinate in the presence of 2 μM of rotenone (S+R), or 3 mM glutamate + 2.5 mM of malate (G+M). ADP (phosphate acceptor) was administered in 0.2 mM concentration.

The following parameters were measured and calculated: V_4^s (oxygen consumption before ADP addition), V_3 (oxygen consumption stimulated by ADP), V_4^{ATP} (oxygen consumption after cessation of ADP phosphorylation), respiratory control ratio by Chance (V_3/V_4^{ATP}), and efficiency of phosphorylation (ADP/O, ADP-to-oxygen-ratio) [Estabrook, 1967]. Oxygen consumption was recorded as ng atoms oxygen per minute per mg mitochondrial protein, determined by the Lowry assay [Lowry et al., 1951].

Statistical analysis

Results were statistically treated with Student's t-test and ANOVA and presented as Mean \pm SD. Statistical differences were considered significant if the P value was <0.05 .

Results

Fig 1 represents the results of PmO_2 measurements under one session of 5 different IHT modes. The initial values are taken as 100%. During Mode 1 (Gr. I-1, 12% O_2 , 5 min + 20,9% O_2 , 5 min), PmO_2 dropped by half by the end of every hypoxic period and recovered quickly after every hypoxic set, to the initial level or even exceeded it by 10-15%. After termination of the session, the value of PmO_2 quickly returned to its original level (Fig.1, Mode 1).

The increase of both hypoxic and normoxic exposures up to 15 min (Gr. I-2), showed

1 similar results as in Gr. I-1 during the first set but provoked a decrease in PmO_2 during
2 following 2 to 5 normoxic periods by 20% and a delay in oxygenation restoration after the
3 session finished (Fig.1, Mode 2).
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8 The 5-min hypoxic load with 12% O_2 but with prolonged breaks of up to 15 min (Gr.
9 I-3) did not lead to the full restoration of muscle oxygen supply after repeated sessions: PmO_2
10 during periods of reoxygenation was reduced by 20-40%, though during hypoxic exposures it
11 dropped similar to Gr. I-1 (by 55-60%). The recovery period after the session was extended,
12 and even at 15 min after training, PmO_2 did not reach the initial level (Fig.1, Mode 3).
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20 More severe hypoxic exposure (7% O_2 , 5 min) led to more severe drop in PmO_2 both
21 during hypoxic and normoxic periods ((by 70-90% and 20-25%, respectively) (Gr. I-4). The
22 lengthening of reoxygenation periods from 5 to 15 min (Gr. I-5) aggravated PmO_2 recovery
23 compared with shorter periods (Fig.1, Modes 4 and 5).
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28 Thus, the most advantageous mode, which provides the least drop in PmO_2 during
29 hypoxic periods and rapid normalization of the skeletal muscle oxygen supply during
30 reoxygenation, is Mode 1. Both the aggravation of hypoxic load and the prolongation of
31 reoxygenation periods cause the disturbances in tissue oxygen supply. Among other modes,
32 the Mode 2 seems to be considered as appropriate because of the smallest failures in oxygen
33 supply during recovery periods.
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42 Since fifth and sixth sets of hypoxia load did not differ significantly in all groups
43 (Fig.1), we used in the sequel 5 hypoxic sets per day for IHT implementation.
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46 To prove the beneficial effects of IHT with Mode 1, we further subjected animals of
47 Gr.I to a 21-day IHT cycle using this mode. For more evidence, we provided PmO_2
48 measurements not only during air breathing but also during AH test (7% O_2 , 30 min) (Fig.2).
49 IHT increased normoxic PmO_2 from control on 7, 14 and 21 days of IHT and it remained up
50 after 2 months. PmO_2 at the end of each acute severe hypoxia test (7% for 30 min) was
51 increased from control by 46%, 63% and 89% after 7, 14, and 21 days of IHT, and was still
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1 elevated 42% 3 months later.

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4 On this basis, we further investigated the liver and heart mitochondrial respiration
5 during three-week course of IHT (Mode 1) and its consequences for 2 and 3 months. For
6 comparison, we also tested IHT in Mode 2 during 21 days.
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11 When using Mode 1, it was shown that adaptation to IHT caused the reorganization of
12 mitochondria energy metabolism. Table 2 shows mitochondrial oxygen consumption data
13 using FADH-(succinate) and NADH-dependent substrates (glutamate + malate). Seven days
14 of IHT treatment (Gr.II-2) induced a decrease in liver mitochondrial O_2 consumption (V_3) at
15 succinate oxidation and an increase in respiratory control ratio (V_3/V_4^{ATP}) indicating the
16 enhancement of respiration and phosphorylation coupling. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of O_2
17 consumption (ADP/O ratio) did not change (Fig.3). This means that the significance of
18 succinate oxidation pathway (mitochondrial enzyme complex II, MEC II), which is effective
19 at acute hypoxia impacts, becomes insignificant under IHT treatment. Mitochondria switch
20 the energy production to a more effective NADH-dependent pathway (mitochondrial enzyme
21 complex I, MEC I). This is well illustrated by mitochondrial oxygen consumption under the
22 MEC I substrates oxidation (Table 2): an increase in V_3/V_4^{ATP} and V_3 by 23% and 20%,
23 respectively. ADP/O ratio increased by 13% (Fig.3). The defined IHT effects for liver
24 mitochondria were also registered after 14- day IHT (Gr. II-3), diminished when using IHT
25 during 21 days (Gr. II-4) and mostly preserved in 2 (Gr. II-5) and 3 (Gr. II-6) months after
26 IHT finished (Table 2, Fig.3).
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47 At the same time, the significant adaptive changes in the heart mitochondrial respiration
48 developed later than in the liver, viz only after 3 weeks of training of training, showing
49 a decrease in V_3 by 11%, an increase in V_3/V_4^{ATP} by 20% when using MEC II substrate, and an
50 increase in V_3 and V_3/V_4^{ATP} by 16% and 26%, respectively, when using MEC I substrate (Gr.
51 II-4). Beneficial effects continued during 2 and 3 months after IHT finishing.
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When using Mode 2 (Table 3), the positive changes in mitochondrial respiration were also registered, but they were less pronounced. For example, after 21-day IHT the V_3/V_4^{ATP} for heart mitochondria increased by 18% (Gr.II-8) as opposed to an increase in this parameter by 26% under Mode 1 (Table 2). For liver mitochondria, the respiratory control ratio changed insignificantly.

Discussion

In this study we compared for the first time the effects of five widespread modes of IHT on rat gastrocnemius muscle PO_2 , and heart and liver mitochondrial respiration. We have proved that 5 hypoxic bouts consisting of 5 min breathing with 12% O_2 and 5 min air breathing is more beneficial than other studied modes, since such regimen led to the minimal drop of the muscle PO_2 at the end of every hypoxic bout and quick recovery after each bout. One, 2 and 3 week training with this mode raised basal tissue oxygenation during normoxia and provided higher PmO_2 level during a subsequent acute hypoxia test. Adaptation to IHT under this mode caused the substrate dependent reorganization of liver and heart mitochondrial energy metabolism favoring NADH-dependent oxidation and improving the efficiency of oxidative phosphorylation. Mitochondrial adaptations developed after 7 days of IHT in liver but after 21 days in myocardium and lasted for three months after IHT termination. When using the IHT mode with the same oxygen content but prolonged normoxic periods up to 15 min, positive changes were also registered, but were less pronounced. Other IHT modes provoked negative effects on PmO_2 levels both during hypoxic periods and reoxygenation.

To determine the optimal mode of IHT in sports and military activities, many authors use such key parameters as increased ventilation, arterial oxygen saturation, hemoglobin or hematocrit values, etc [Musa, 2007; Wilber et al., 2007; Katayama et al, 2009; Millet et al., 2010]. In our experiments on animals, we took the most informative integral parameter of muscle oxygen supply - PmO_2 .

Animal investigations have also used a variety of exposure paradigms to study intermittent hypoxia. Foster et al. [2005] using two regimens - (1) 5 min of 12% O_2 / 5 min of air, 1 hr, 12 day, and (2) 30 min of 12% O_2 , 12 days - showed that both short and long hypoxic durations had similar effects on the ventilatory and cardiovascular response to acute

1 progressive hypoxia. The similar results were obtained on humans [Ainslie et al., 2007] who
2 compared short-term intermittent hypoxia (IH: 5-min hypoxia to 5-min normoxia, 90
3 min/day, 12 days) with continuous hypoxia (CH: ascending to 1,560 m altitude for 12 days)
4 and showed that IH and mild CH can equally enhance the HVR which facilitates alterations in
5 blood pressure and middle cerebral artery blood flow velocity.
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12 But most authors consider that the shorter periods of hypoxic and normoxic exposures
13 have more beneficial effects on an organism. Currently, there is practical necessity to
14 decrease training time for achieving long-term adaptation, while maintaining its effectiveness.
15 As Lukyanova [2005] suggested, [short term hypoxia doesn't cause tissue damage and permits](#)
16 [changes of mitochondrial enzymes to occur during normoxic intervals.](#)
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24 Peng & Prabhakar [2004] exposed rats to either short-duration intermittent hypoxia
25 (SDIH, 15 s of 5% O₂ at 5 min intervals, 8 hr day⁻¹) or long-duration hypobaric intermittent
26 hypoxia (LDIH, 4 h day⁻¹, 0.4 atm for 10 days) and showed that exposure to SDIH enhanced
27 carotid body sensory response to hypoxia, but exposure to LDIH did not. Satriotomo et al
28 [2012] believe that acute intermittent hypoxia (5-min episodes of 10.5% O₂ with 5-min
29 normoxic intervals) initiates plasticity in respiratory motor control. Hu et al [2010] using rat
30 model's hypoxic preconditioning, concluded that 15%-10% oxygen concentration range with
31 short breaks could be regarded as a helpful effective area.
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42 One of the key mechanisms of cell damage during hypoxia and reoxygenation is an
43 excessive production of reactive oxygen and nitrogen species in mitochondria. These
44 considerations may partly explain why the prolongation of reoxygenation periods in our
45 studies from 5 to 15 minutes (Modes 2, 3 and 5) led to the deterioration of muscle oxygen
46 supply. Probably, longer normoxia provokes greater free radicals production preventing
47 normal oxygen delivery to tissues. On the other hand, there is evidence that by [using 30% O₂](#)
48 [during recovery, adaptation](#) to IHT could be achieved earlier and provide the upregulation of
49 adaptive ROS signals compared to classical intermittent hypoxic training [Zhukova et al.,
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2005; Gonchar & Mankovska, 2012]. Studies support the [viewpoint that brief hypoxic generation of free radicals induces antioxidant](#) enzyme protein synthesis that may be an important trigger for specific adaptations. Unfortunately, fundamental molecular studies on cell culture models [Mansfield et al., 2005; Kim et al, 2006; Chua et al., 2010] which provided important insights into mechanisms of HIF activation by hypoxia, can not explain exactly why the prolongation of reoxygenation periods during IHT treatment provoked less positive effects on PmO₂ level. We understand that a more reasonable explanation of this phenomenon needs further investigation.

Additionally, [reactive oxygen species](#) (ROS) also function as secondary messengers in a variety of physiological processes increasing antioxidant defense. It was shown that ROS participate in the signaling pathways involved in the activation of multiple transcription factors such as HIF-1, NF- κ B, c-fos, c-Jun under IHT [Sasaki et al., 2001; Huang et al., 2005; Prabhakar & Semenza, 2012]. In our experiments the extension of reoxygenating periods both after moderate (12 % O₂) and severe (7% O₂) hypoxia resulted in the deterioration of muscle oxygen supply. In addition, a decrease in oxygen content per se from 12% to 7% also led to worsening of tissue PO₂. As Wang et al [2007] suggest, severe but not moderate IH regimens decrease anti-oxidative capacity and increase lipid peroxidation leading to the suppression of vascular endothelial function, causing impairment of hemodynamic.

Our investigations also have shown that adaptation to IHT in Mode I caused reorganization of liver and myocardium mitochondrial energy metabolism favoring NADH-dependent oxidation. Since mitochondrial superoxide production is inversely related to MEC I activity, the activation of the latter by IHT could limit the oxidative stress development under acute hypoxia [Verkaart et al., 2005; Koopman et al., 2005]. So, increasing oxidation of NAD-generated substrates may preserve the mitochondrial oxygen consumption capacity during stress conditions. One can also assume that adaptation to IHT decreased the vulnerability of heart and liver mitochondria to ROS as demonstrated by elevated respiratory control ratio,

1
2 ADP/O ration, and maximal rate of oxidative phosphorylation.

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4 When using Mode 2, positive changes in mitochondrial respiration were also
5
6 registered, but they were less pronounced.

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8 Our findings are in agreement with the previous reports demonstrating the activation of
9
10 mitochondrial respiration by IHT [Prabhakar & Kumar, 2004; Kurhaliuk et al., 2002;
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12 Kurhaluk et al., 2013]. As Lukyanova et al. [2009] suggest, the suppressed function of MEC I
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14 and the alternative activation of MEC II comprise a signaling regulatory mechanism which
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16 contributes to the formation of tissue-specific and general resistance of the body to different
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18 types of hypoxia.

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21 Recent studies demonstrated the mechanisms by which intermittent hypoxia reversibly
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23 inactivates MEC I. The primordial function of HIF-1 appears to involve finding the optimal
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25 balance between oxidative and glycolytic metabolism for any given cell as a function of the
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27 local O₂ concentration [Prabhakar & Semenza, 2012]. Based on cell culture experiments with
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29 very short (30 sec) intermittent hypoxic exposures, Khan et al [2011] identified NADPH
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31 oxidases and mitochondrial electron transport chain at MEC I as major cellular ROS sources
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33 mediating systemic and cellular responses to intermittent hypoxia and demonstrated a
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35 functional cross-talk between NADPH oxidases and MEC I activity.

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38 According to our results, we consider that the Mode 1 of IHT (5- min 12% O₂ with 5-min
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40 normoxic intervals) is more effective and less dangerous for the studied organs and tissues
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42 and may be recommended for sports as well as prophylaxis and treatment of cardiac and lung
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44 pathology. However, we must take into account that all these beneficial results were obtained
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46 on a rat model. In actual human practice [Musa, 2007], the regimen of IHT (the degree of
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48 hypoxia, exposure duration and number of sessions) could be related to the mission
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50 requirements, such as the operational target altitude, the risk of developing acute mountain
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52 sickness, or the anticipated physical activity levels.

CONCLUSION

Our experimental data indicates that among 5 tested modes of IHT, optimal hypoxic dose for muscle oxygen supply is 5-min breathing with 12 % O₂ gas mixture and 5-min breaks (Mode 1), 5-6 times a day during two or three weeks. Under such mode, PmO₂ dropped minimally to the end of every hypoxic period and recovered quickly after every hypoxic set to initial level or even exceeded it. One, 2 or 3 week training with this mode raised basal tissue oxygenation during normoxia and provided higher PmO₂ level during acute hypoxia. Under other modes, PmO₂ did not reach normoxic level during every set, and the recovery period after one IHT session was delayed for 10-15 min.

Using Mode 1, it was shown that adaptation to IHT caused the substrate dependent reorganization of liver and heart mitochondrial energy metabolism favoring NADH-dependent oxidation and improving the efficiency of oxidative phosphorylation. Mitochondrial adaptation developed after 7 days of IHT in liver tissue, but after 21 days in myocardium and was preserved for three months after IHT termination. When using Mode 2 (15-min 12% O₂ with 15-min breaks), positive changes in mitochondrial respiration were also registered, but were less pronounced.

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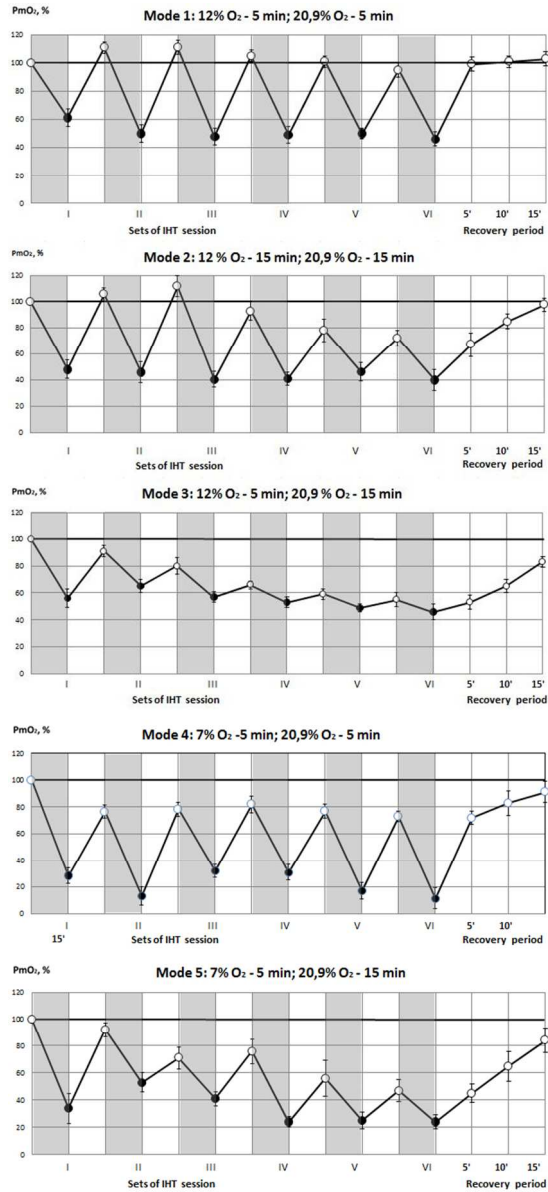
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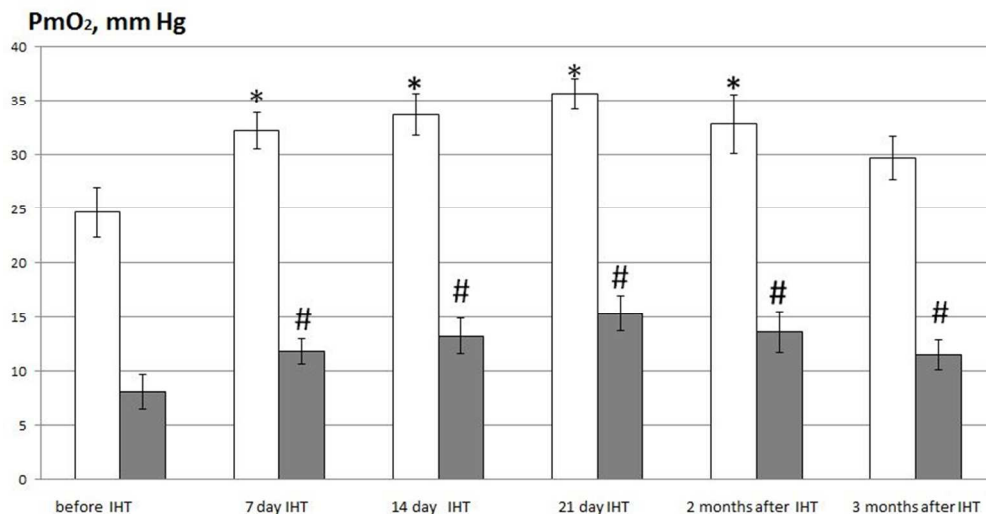
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Oxygen tension (PmO₂) in rat m. gastrocnemius under one session of 5 different IHT modes. The initial values are taken as 100%. I-VI – sets of IHT. Gray panels – hypoxic periods; white panels – normoxic periods.

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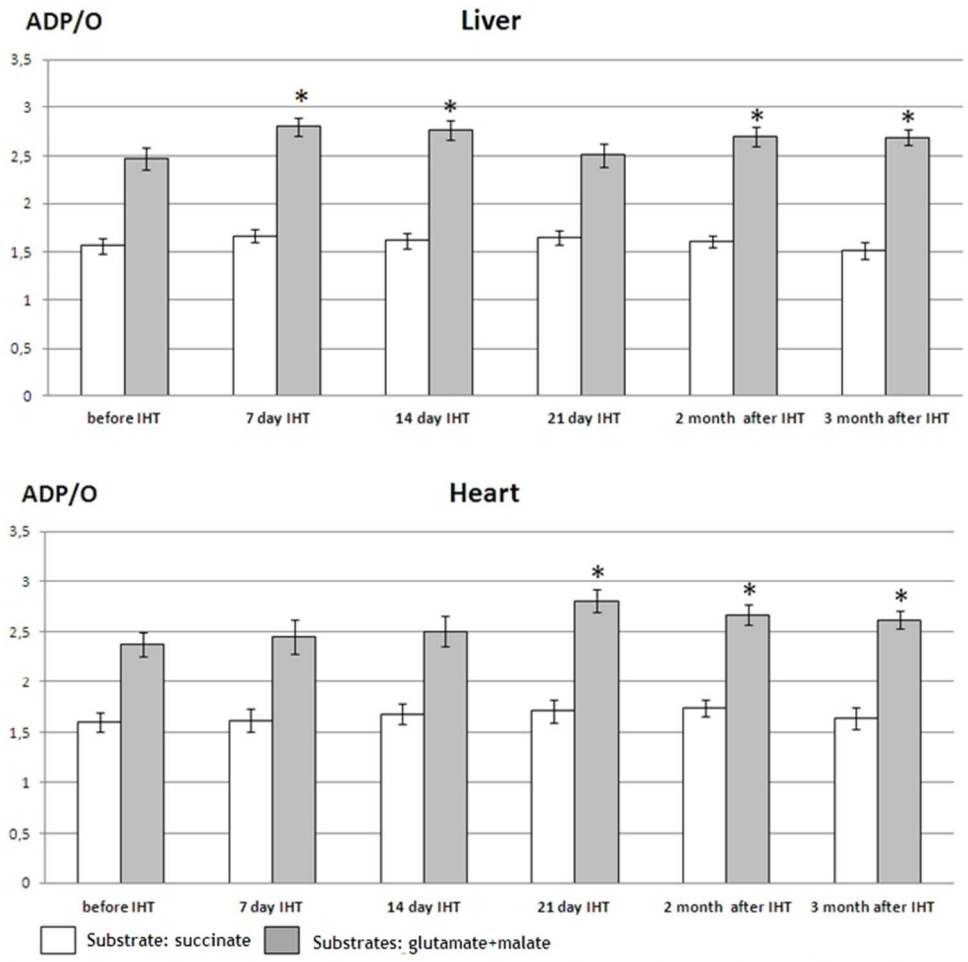
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Oxygen tension (PmO₂) in rat m. gastrocnemius under acute hypoxia test (breathing with 7% O₂, 30 min). White columns – measurements during air breathing; gray columns – measurements at 30th min hypoxia. *, P<0.05, significantly different from initial normoxic value (before IHT); #, P<0.05, significantly different from 30th min hypoxia before IHT.

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or Distribution

Figure legends

Figure 1. Oxygen tension (PmO_2) in rat *m. gastrocnemius* under one session of 5 different IHT modes.

The initial values are taken as 100%. I-YI – sets of IHT. Gray panels – hypoxic periods; white panels – normoxic periods.

Figure 2. Oxygen tension (PmO_2) in rat *m. gastrocnemius* during 1, 2 and 3 week IHT in Mode 1 under normoxia and acute hypoxia test (breathing with 7% O_2 , 30 min).

White columns – measurements during air breathing; gray columns – measurements at 30th min hypoxia test.

*, $P < 0.05$, significantly different from initial normoxic value (before IHT); #, $P < 0.05$, significantly different from 30th min hypoxia before IHT.

Figure 3. Effectiveness of O_2 consumption by liver and heart mitochondria under IHT.

White columns characterize ADP/O ratio when using the MEC II substrate succinate (in the presence of rotenone) for oxidation; gray columns – ADP/O ratio when using the MEC I substrates (glutamate+malate) for oxidation.

*, $P < 0.05$, significantly different from initial value (before IHT).

Table 1. Description of IHT modes

Mode	Group of animals	Hypoxic periods		Normoxic periods	
		O ₂ content, %	Duration, min	O ₂ content, %	Duration, min
1	Gr. I-1	12	5	20,9	5
2	Gr. I-2	12	15	20,9	15
3	Gr. I-3	12	5	20,9	15
4	Gr. I-4	7	5	20,9	5
5	Gr. I-5	7	5	20,9	15

Serebrovskaya et al. Intermittent Hypoxia Modes

Table 2. Oxygen consumption of rat liver and heart mitochondria under IHT, Mode 1.**MEC II substrate: succinate (in the presence of rotenone)**

	Liver		Heart	
	V_3	V_3/V_4^{ATP}	V_3	V_3/V_4^{ATP}
Gr. II-1: Control (sham IHT)	51.41 ± 2.62	2.58 ± 0.09	54.11 ± 2.22	2.81 ± 0.14
Gr. II-2: 7 days of IHT	43.75 ± 2.0*	2.88 ± 0.08*	52.16 ± 2.76	2.88 ± 0.15
Gr. II-3: 14 days of IHT	45.12 ± 2.37*	2.76 ± 0.07*	50.72 ± 3.15	3.0 ± 0.17
Gr. II-4: 21 days of IHT	51.82 ± 2.84	2.70 ± 0.10	48.08 ± 1.84*	3.36 ± 0.11*
Gr. II-5: 2 months after IHT	48.33 ± 3.11	2.76 ± 0.07*	51.27 ± 2.70	3.16 ± 0.11*
Gr. II-6: 3 months after IHT	50.17 ± 2.83	2.77 ± 0.07*	53.88 ± 3.09	3.09 ± 0.10*

MEC I substrates: glutamate + malate

Gr II-1: Control (sham IHT)	48.62 ± 2.90	3.12 ± 0.13	50.5 ± 2.20	3.05 ± 0.19
Gr. II-2: 7 days of IHT	58.40 ± 2.46*	3.84 ± 0.17*	53.80 ± 2.71	3.18 ± 0.22
Gr. II-3: 14 days of IHT	59.24 ± 2.38*	3.76 ± 0.14*	51.78 ± 2.54	3.26 ± 0.17
Gr. II-4: 21 days of IHT	53.85 ± 2.70	3.48 ± 0.12*	58.44 ± 2.45*	3.84 ± 0.27*
Gr. II-5: 2 months after IHT	54.72 ± 3.13	3.42 ± 0.11*	55.16 ± 3.07	3.66 ± 0.17*
Gr. II-6: 3 months after IHT	51.18 ± 2.84	3.37 ± 0.10*	51.74 ± 2.94	3.45 ± 0.18*

Values are means ± SD.

V_3 , oxygen consumption stimulated by ADP; V_4^{ATP} , oxygen consumption after cessation of ADP phosphorylation; V_3/V_4^{ATP} , respiratory control ratio.

(*) - statistical difference comparing to Gr II-1, $p < 0.05$.

Table 3. Oxygen consumption of rat liver and heart mitochondria under IHT, Mode 2.**MEC II substrate: succinate (in the presence of rotenone)**

	Liver		Heart	
	V_3	V_3/V_4^{ATP}	V_3	V_3/V_4^{ATP}
Gr.II-7: Control (sham IHT)	58.24 ± 2.48	2.97 ± 0.12	65.54 ± 3.18	2.22 ± 0.12
Gr.II-8: 21 days of IHT	52.17 ± 3.05*	3.12 ± 0.10	79.86 ± 3.84*	2.43 ± 0.11

MEC I substrates: glutamate + malate

Gr.II-7: Control (sham IHT)	53.76 ± 2.36	3.48 ± 0.11	50.5 ± 2.2	3.24 ± 0.13
Gr.II-8: 21 days of IHT	58.87 ± 2.40*	3.61 ± 0.12	58.44 ± 2.45*	3.82 ± 0.12*

Values are means ± SD.

V_3 , oxygen consumption stimulated by ADP; V_4^{ATP} , oxygen consumption after cessation of ADP phosphorylation;

V_3/V_4^{ATP} , respiratory control ratio.

(*) - statistical difference comparing to Gr.II-7, $p < 0.05$.