



## Heart Rate Monitoring

*Why use a heart rate monitor?*



The heart is the core of your body's power plant. It is the strongest muscle in your body. For as long as you are alive, your heart never stops beating. As you rest, move, and exercise, your heart constantly self-regulates its action to provide your muscles and organs with the energy they need. Your heart rate is variable and complex, especially during stressful activity.

To understand your body's fitness, you need to be aware of what your heart is doing from moment to moment. The heart rate is the efficiency rating of the entire body. As your fitness improves, your heart rate improves with it. This is where a Heart Rate Monitor comes in.

Here are just a few of the powerful benefits of using a Heart Rate Monitor:

- Exercise becomes more time-efficient and safe
- Fitness programs can be more easily personalized and made fun
- Workout intensity can be measured simply and reliably
- Results become apparent that might otherwise not be seen
- Goals are more easily set and reached
- Progress toward fitness is easily tracked
- Motivation to improve increases
- Confidence is bolstered and reinforced
- Knowledge replaces guesswork



A Heart Rate Monitor is not just for structured exercise. It can help turn any activity into a workout.

### **Overcoming Obstacles and Reaching Fitness**

Statistics show that over 70% of the people who start an exercise program will quit within the first six months and many within the first few weeks. What makes it so hard for individuals to stick with an exercise program? Why do they give up so quickly?

Most people start an exercise program with a specific goal or need in mind. That is the driving force or motivation behind their desire to exercise. However, many people run into common obstacles that cause them to lose sight of these goals, and so they begin to lose their motivation to keep going.

Fortunately, a heart rate monitor can provide the solution to many of the obstacles that stand in the way of your success in an exercise program!

One challenge lies in understanding the connection between heart rate and fitness. If your heart rate is too low during exercise, your body reaps little or no benefits. This means you are not likely to see the results you want, like weight loss or increased endurance. On the other hand, if your heart rate is too high during exercise, you may tire too quickly and become frustrated. You even run the risk of injury. In either case, you are likely to quit exercising because you are not getting the results you want. A Heart Rate Monitor assures you that you are in the right zone for the workout you're doing.



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Another problem is in measuring the most useful heart rate. Different techniques measure different pulses, and the techniques required to take the correct pulse accurately can be tricky or intimidating. Even at best, a finger on the right pulse can only give a ballpark of the most valuable heart rate for fitness measurement, which is electrical. A Heart Rate Monitor is easy to put on and use, and gives consistent results.

Without a Heart Rate Monitor, it can be difficult to track your progress. The advantage is obvious to exercising with a device that can record your heart rate over time, perform complex calculations for you, and provide reliability in measurements. The overall trend of fitness becomes easy to see. Your fitness knowledge is no longer confined to counting between heartbeats; with a Heart rate Monitor keeping track, that knowledge skyrockets to a total life perspective.

Finally, it can be frustrating to begin an exercise program when the apparent results seem so far down the road. It takes four to six weeks of consistent exercise before you begin to see any external changes to your body. Yet, internal improvements begin to take place immediately although you can't see them. A Heart Rate Monitor can reveal that the inside is changing -- it is reassuring to know that the outside can't be too far behind.

So if you want to have effective workouts, maximize your exercise experience, be motivated by seeing real changes and be able to track those changes, then a heart rate monitor is the best tool for the job.

### **Who should use an HRM?**

Anyone who wants to:

- Burn more calories in the same amount of time
- Avoid guessing their work intensity
- Increase motivation to exercise
- Understand the numbers that make exercise valuable and create accountability
- Know data such as calories burned, average HR, time in target zone, etc.
- Have different workout types in order to make exercise interesting (some would even call it FUN!)
- Increase cardiovascular conditioning and reduce chance of cardiovascular disease
- Lower their resting heart rate
- Increase their metabolism and overall body efficiency
- Provide the right mixes of aerobic (longer time spent) and anaerobic (higher intensity) exercise to increase AT and VO2 Max.
- Avoid over-training



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## Why can't I just take my own heart rate by putting my finger on my neck or wrist?

It has been found that people who used this method -- called the palpitation method -- found that their palpated rates were 13 beats per minute (bpm) less than electronic rates following the 1-mile walk and 17 bpm less following the 1-mile jog. Thirteen beats per minute can take you into an entirely different exercise intensity than what you had originally intended.

## Why can't I just hold on to the handles on the exercise machines and get my heart rate there?

Holding on to the pulse meters while exercising is not advised. You cannot get a moment-to-moment reading while you exercise. By the time you stop exercising and take a reading, your heart rate may already have dropped.

Also, exercise machine sensors give you your pulse rate, which is the opening and closing of an artery at a specific point. They do not measure heart rate, which is the electrical signal of the heart sent by the Sinal Atrial Node. See the question above regarding the palpitation method.

Finally, exercise machine sensors have no capability for programming exercise specific to you and your goals. They are a one-size-fits-all kind of technology.

## Heart Rate Zones and Benefits

TARGET ZONE	INTENSITY % OF HRmax	EXAMPLE DURATIONS	PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFIT / TRAINING EFFECT
5 Maximum 	90-100%	Less than 5 minutes	Benefits: Increases maximum sprint race speed Feels like: Very exhausting for breathing and muscles Recommended for: Very fit persons with athletic training background
4 Hard 	80-90%	2 - 10 minutes	Benefits: Increases maximum performance capacity Feels like: Muscular fatigue and heavy breathing Recommended for: Fit users and for short excercises
3 Moderate 	70-80%	10 - 40 minutes	Benefits: Improves aerobic fitness Feels like: Light muscular fatigue, easy breathing, moderate sweating Recommended for: Everybody
2 Light 	60-70%	40 - 80 minutes	Benefits: Improves endurance, helps recovery Feels like: Comfortable, easy breathing, light sweating Recommended for: Everybody
1 Very light 	50-60%	20 - 40 minutes	Benefits: Improves overall health and metabolism Feels like: Very easy for all bodily functions Recommended for: Novice exercisers, weight management, active recovery