Heart Rate

Measuring your heart rate is helpful to determine your initial cardiovascular fitness level. It also helps you monitor your progress when working towards goals for maintaining or improving levels of fitness. Measuring your pulse periodically is a skill needed to self-assess both your level of effort (intensity) during exercise and the progress you are making towards your goals.

Resting Heart Rate – the number of times the heart beats in one minute when the body is completely at rest. More physically fit people tend to have a lower resting heart rate because their heart is beating more efficiently.

Maximum Heart Rate – the maximum number of times the heart can beat in a minute. This can be found by subtracting your age from 220. Measured in BPM (beats per minute). Example: The MHR for a 15 year would be – 220-15 = 215 beats per minute Pulse – the rush of the blood through the arteries after each time the heart beats. Your pulse is measured by the number of times your heart beats in one minute. Pulse rates vary from person to person. Your pulse is lower when you are at rest and increases when you exercise.

Target Heart Rate Zone or Target Heart Rate – has been established as the recommended intensity for a good cardiovascular workout. Exercising in this zone will develop your cardiovascular system. Since the body cannot exercise at the maximum heart rate for long, a range of between 70% and 90% of maximum heart rate is recommended for the target heart rate zone

Here is how to calculate your target heart rate range…

1) First of all you need the following data:

A) Maximum Heart Rate—(220 – your age = MHR) My MHR = _____

B) Resting Heart Rate—(count pulse at rest for 1 minute) My RHR = _____

2) Enter the above data in the following two formulas and solve.

The formulas represent the lower (60%) and upper (85%) limits of your target heart rate range.

(60%):_____ - _____ = _____ x .6 = _____ + _____ = _____ LOWER LIMIT
(MHR) (RHR) (RHR)

(85%):_____ - _____ = _____ x .85 = _____ + _____ = _____ UPPER LIMIT
(MHR) (RHR) (RHR)

3) Enter your target heart rate:

My target heart rate is: _____ to _____
(lower limit) (upper limit)

How to use your target heart rate:

After at least five minutes of continuous aerobic exercise take your pulse for six seconds. Then multiply by 10 or add a zero to the end—for example, a six second pulse of 17 would be 170. Check to see if your pulse is in your target heart rate range. If it is higher—slow down. If it is lower—speed up.