

Find Your Target Heart Rate

Understanding Heart Rate

Your heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute – it is a way to gauge how well your heart muscle is functioning. A normal heart rate is different for everyone. It is suggested that a high resting heart rate or a low maximum heart rate may signify low cardiovascular fitness and an increased risk of heart disease.



Resting Heart Rate (RHR):

This term refers to the number of times your heart beats per minute while you are in a resting state. A RHR can range from 60 to 100 beats per minute - this rate can be affected by stress, sleep, anxiety, food, medication and how physically active you are. The best time to check your RHR is first thing in the morning. When it comes to your RHR, the lower the number, the better – this is a good indicator that your heart muscle is functioning within a normal range.

Tips before checking your RHR

- Do not check heart rate after exercising or stressful events.
- Wait at least an hour after consuming caffeine.

Find your Target Heart Rate Zone

Target heart rate zone is the optimum heart rate at which you should train in order to get an effective workout. Typically, your target heart rate is between 50% and 85% of your maximum heart rate, which is the highest heart rate you can achieve safely through exercise. Knowing what this zone should be will help you pace yourself so you can train as efficiently as possible without tiring too quickly.

What do the Numbers Mean?

Maximum Heart Rate (MHR)	Low end of target HR zone	High end of target HR zone
Your MHR is the highest heart rate you can safely achieve through exercise. This measure depends on your age and is most commonly calculated through the following formula: Max. Heart Rate = 220 – age	The low end of your target heart rate zone is typically 50% of your maximum heart rate. If your heart beats fewer times than this per minute, you are not working hard enough. Step up the intensity!	The high end of your target heart rate zone is typically 85% of your maximum heart rate. If your heart is beating faster than this, you need to slow down.

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Putting it into Action

The next time you exercise check to see if your heart rate is within your heart rate training zone. That is, in between the low and the high end of your target zone. If you are new to exercising, stick to the lower end of your target zone. As your fitness improves you can increase the intensity until you are training in the middle and upper end of your target zone to achieve optimal results.

Use the chart as a guide to determine how fast your heart should be beating during exercise. Find your age and see what your target heart rate zone is.

Age	Target Heart Rate Zone 50–85%	Average Maximum Heart Rate 100%
20	100–170 beats per minute	200 beats per minute
25	98–166 beats per minute	195 beats per minute
30	95–162 beats per minute	190 beats per minute
35	93–157 beats per minute	185 beats per minute
40	90–153 beats per minute	180 beats per minute
45	88–149 beats per minute	175 beats per minute
50	85–145 beats per minute	170 beats per minute
55	83–140 beats per minute	165 beats per minute
60	80–136 beats per minute	160 beats per minute
65	78–132 beats per minute	155 beats per minute
70	75–128 beats per minute	150 beats per minute

Measuring your Heart Rate

One of the easiest methods to measure your heart rate is to wear a heart rate monitor. Fit Bits and wearable technology have this built in, as well as most cardio machines have a HR monitor connected to them. If you don't have either of these options, try the following:

- Place your index and middle fingers directly under your ear. Slide your fingers down until they are directly under your jaw bone, pressing lightly. Take your pulse, counting the number of heart beats. You may count for a full 60 seconds, or count for 6 seconds and add a zero on the end of that number, to get the number of beats per minute.
- Place your index and middle fingers on the underside of your wrist, just at the base of your thumb, pressing lightly. Again, count the number of heart beats per minute.

Keep in mind these methods used to determine your target heart rates are only an estimate. A more accurate method is a “treadmill” test administered by a professional.

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