

INTENSITY LEVELS

A heart rate monitor is a common method of measuring the increased heart rate that occurs with exercise. (The greater the intensity of a certain activity being performed, the higher the heart rate.) This method is expressed as a percentage of maximum heart rate. All activity whether done at a light, moderate or hard level of intensity expends energy, which means it is helpful for weight loss. The more intense the exercise and/or the longer the duration of exercise, the greater the energy expended per minute and the greater the impact on weight loss.

TRACKING YOUR INTENSITY LEVELS IF YOU ARE USING A HEART RATE MONITOR

Maximum Heart Rate: _____ *Basic formula: $(220 - \text{age})$

Training Heart Rate: _____ *Basic formula: $(180 - \text{age})$

An effective, safe heart rate range is 50% – 85% of max heart rate. **Your target heart rate range is an estimate, and it may not be the right exercise intensity for you. It's based on a formula and not everyone fits into the average. Your target heart rate may change over time as you become more fit too, so consider re-evaluating your range every few months.*

50% _____
 60% _____
 70% _____
 80% _____
 90% _____
 100% _____

Example: Age: 45 / What is 80% of max HR?

$$\text{Max Heart Rate } (220 - \text{Age}) \times \text{Intensity \%}$$

$$220 - 45 = 175 \times .80 = \mathbf{140}$$

HEART RATE LEVEL	EFFORT	EFFECT
50-59%	Very Light	Improves overall health and helps recovery
60-69%	Light	Improves basic endurance and fat burning
70-79%	Moderate	Improves aerobic fitness and fat burning
80-89%	Hard	Increases maximum performance capacity
90-99%	Very Hard	Develops maximum performance and speed

OVERVIEW OF INTENSITY LEVELS

50-59%: This is the easiest intensity you can workout at and still improve your fitness. This level is commonly known as a low or very light intensity level. Your body picks fat as fuel for the working muscles at this level. Many people feel this cardio pace is too easy, but enjoy it while you are just starting out with your workouts. In the beginning it's about training smarter, not harder.

60-69%: This level is commonly known as a light intensity level. You will still find this pace pretty easy once your body becomes adapted to your daily workouts. Improvements to your cardiorespiratory fitness will remain limited. However, there are many health benefits to be gained from exercising within these percentages. Fat will continue to remain the main source of fuel at this cardio intensity level.

70-79%: This range is commonly known as a moderate intensity level. You will still be able to carry on a light conversation at this level. These percentages are in your target heart rate zone. Your endurance will improve at this level since lactic acid is not yet building up. As you become more fit, your body will be able to stay at this pace longer due to the fact that your body is still using fat as the main energy source.

80-89%: This is where you will be hitting your anaerobic threshold. This level is commonly known as a hard or high level of intensity. Your heart and lungs can't supply enough oxygen to keep up with the demand at this level. Your body starts to compensate by burning glucose instead of fat. Anaerobic production only lasts a few seconds, and then lactic acid build up occurs. Your anaerobic threshold will actually increase as you get more fit, meaning that you will be able to keep this high intensity level longer the more in shape you become. Repeated high intensity, short duration interval training is the ultimate goal. Even so, it's recommended to only do this pace once a week until your body adjusts to (HIIT) high intensity interval training. With time training hard, many experienced competitors are able to keep this vigorous level for hours. There is no need for the majority of people to push past this heart rate intensity level.

90-99%: This is the most challenging heart rate level which develops maximum performance and speed. These high percentages are only for skilled, elite athletes. This level is commonly known as a very hard intensity level. Please avoid this level if you are an inexperienced exerciser.