

Wellness Wisdom



Louisiana State University Health Science Center

Understanding Target Heart Rate

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Target heart rate is a term often used when referring to aerobic training, but what does it mean? To truly understand target heart rate you must be aware of some important values that are necessary to obtain an appropriate target heart rate range. Heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute. The average resting heart rate for an adult is between 60 to 80 beats per minute, but this can vary with age, gender, and aerobic conditioning. There are three sites where you can measure your heart rate: the radial, brachial, and the carotid artery. To measure your heart rate place your index and middle finger on one of the three sites for a 15 second interval then multiply by 4. Resting heart rate should be measured as soon as you wake up. For a more accurate reading take your resting heart rate three consecutive days before getting out of bed for one minute and find the average. An estimated maximal heart rate can be determined by using the formula $220 - \text{age}$.

Target heart rate is found by using the Karvonen formula, $(HR_{\text{max}} - HR_{\text{resting}}) \times (\% \text{ of intensity}) + (HR_{\text{resting}})$ and it is used as a guide to determine your target heart rate at specific intensity levels. ACSM recommends that your intensity levels stay between 55 to 80 percent of your maximum heart rate, for 20 to 60 minutes (or 10 minutes bouts through the day) 3 to 5 days a week.

When beginning a cardiovascular training program, you must consider the importance of intensity. It is recommended that you first use the Karvonen formula to figure out your training heart rate range. Intensity levels may vary depending upon fitness classification. In conjunction with intensity levels you want to consider the duration of your exercise session. Keep in mind that "intensity and duration are inversely related, as one increases the other decreases."

Warming up and cooling down is an important part of any training program. A proper warm up can "improve performance and decrease cardiac events, while a proper cool down will prevent blood pooling and clear metabolic wastes from skeletal muscle."

Ready to get started with your training program, but want to make sure you are on the right track, schedule a **FREE** fitness orientation today!!!

$$HR_{\text{max}} = 220 - \text{age}$$

$$HR_{\text{resting}} = \text{beats per min}$$

$$THRR = [(HR_{\text{max}} - HR_{\text{resting}}) \times (\text{intensity } \%)] + HR_{\text{resting}}$$