

## What a Heart Rate Monitor can do for you....by Ken Friesen

The best way to measure the intensity of your workouts is with a Heart Rate Monitor. Knowing what intensity level you are working at will tell you what effect it is having on your body. Different target Heart Rate (HR) Zones generate different benefits and knowing this will help get you the maximum benefit from your workouts. Working out in the correct Zone will prevent you from going too hard, which can result in injury, or going too easy and not seeing any improvements.

The target zones and how to calculate them is as follows:

~ Everyone is different but a general rule of thumb used to determine your maximum HR is 220 minus your age.

Zone 1 ~ 50 to 60 % of max HR helps with recovery the day after a strenuous workout or race. This rate is too easy for your regular workouts to be highly effective.

Zone 2 ~ 60 to 70 % of max HR is best for weight loss, general fitness and endurance.

Zone 3 ~ 70 to 80 % of max HR is still mainly aerobic and can consist of longer interval training and recovery. For a healthy runner this is a great Zone to be in for your average daily workouts.

Zone 4 ~ 80 to 90 % of max HR is now working your anaerobic tolerance levels. This level is achieved in intervals up to 12 minutes with similar recovery time between each one and will improve your high-speed endurance.

Zone 5 ~ 90 to 100 % of max HR is for short intervals up to 3 minutes each and helps improve sprint speed. Zone 4 and 5 workouts are used to help you perform at your top potential.

An example of the concept is a 30 year old looking to increase fat metabolism or loose weight. This person would want to find their 60 to 70 % Target Zone-

$$220 - 30 = 190 \text{ (max HR)}$$

$190 \times .60 = 114$  (**lower limit**). Below this HR would give minimal results

$190 \times .70 = 133$  (**upper limit**). Above this HR and they may find muscle soreness, chance of injury and the tendency to not maintaining a long-term exercise program.

These Zones work for any activity that you want to do whether it is running, swimming, biking or skipping rope. Your body adapts to routine so you have to vary your workouts to improve your overall fitness. You can go for longer runs at an easy pace in Zone 2 one day and then a tempo workout the next at under 80% of max HR which is Zone 3. Doing some interval workouts or hill repeats on another day adds another dimension to the overall program.

Most Heart Rate Monitors cost around 79.00 to 259.00. The difference in models is in the extra features you get such as lap times and calories burned. The accuracy of the HR reading should be the same on brand name models as long as they use the chest transmitter. The models that are worn on the wrist with no chest transmitter are less expensive but definitely less accurate.

You will get many years use out of a good HR monitor.

A hint to extend the life of your batteries is to make sure the transmitter strap is dried off after each use and kept separate from any watch or other electronic items. This keeps it from picking up the electrical signal and continuing to transmit when you have finished with it.

If you are interested in improving and maybe want to compete in races and are not sure when in the yearly cycle of training you should be doing which type of intensity or how much, then joining a running club or taking a clinic with an experienced coach may help you greatly.

A good website to check out is [www.polarca.com](http://www.polarca.com) for additional information.

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