

Why should I Target my Heart Rate?

The heart responds to exercise like any other muscle in the body; just as lifting weights can make the biceps muscle bigger and stronger, exercising the heart will make it stronger and more efficient. When I say 'more efficient', it does not have to work hard for daily functional living (picking up groceries, going up a flight of stairs, carrying the children) One process used to making our hearts more efficient is exercising the heart at a precise rate. This term is called targeting the heart rate knowing and using this technique is another tool we can use in our efforts to lose weight.

Heart rate training may sound advanced or complicated, but it's really not. Heart rate training is exercising at the right intensity for burning fat, strengthening your cardiovascular system or whatever your exercise goals may be. Your heart rate is the indicator that will tell you when you are exercising at the right intensity for your specified goal. That is why it is good to know that number and know how to calculate that number.

When you target your heart rate you are practicing specific training to burn calories. That is because your target heart rate reflects the rate at which your body is using oxygen, as well as the rate at which it is burning calories (speeding metabolism). The more oxygen you are using, the more calories you are burning. If your target heart rate is 148 and you are trying to lose weight; you want to maintain this level of oxygen usage for at least 25 minutes to hit your weight loss zone. Here you will be using the required amount of oxygen that is necessary to burn excess calories. **OXYGEN USAGE IS THE KEY TO WEIGHT LOSS**

From time to time people ask how to maintain their current weight; once you reach your ideal weight, you can exercise in the maintenance zone. The maintenance zone is a target heart rate of 60%-70%.

Tools to determine heart rate

1. Heart rate monitor (recommended). This consist of 2 pieces a strap around the chest and a wrist watch receiver. When you turn it on, the monitor detects your heart rate and sends the info. to the receiver. The wrist watch displays your current heart rate.
2. Breathing rate (perceived exertion). Typically used if you don't have a monitor. Can be quite effective if you really ask yourself how hard you are working on a scale from 1 to 10 or 1 to 5.
3. Checking your pulse. This can be hard, because you have to stop working, pause for a moment then take your pulse; also it can be hard to find. The perceived exertion test is a better alternative.

Target Heart Rate Formula: (example)

Calculate Maximum Heart Rate $220 (226 \text{ for women}) - \text{age } (35) = 185 \text{ (MHR)}$

Calculate Target Heart Rate for weight loss zone

70% of maximum heart rate: $185 \times 70\% = 130$

80% of maximum heart rate: $185 \times 80\% = 148$

The Karvonen (more recommended) method is more accurate. A copy of it is attached.

The Weight Loss Zone is from 130 to 148. You want to effectively work in this range for a minimum of 20-25 minutes for results.

If weight loss is your goal, heart rate training and healthy eating are your best bet. Not only will you lose weight, but you will be doing it in a safe and healthy manner...which means you will keep it off.

Please remember to eat a healthy diet and have an exercise program that you participate in at least 3 days a week.