

## Heart Rates

You can exercise at different levels. Think of the last time you took a walk. Now think of the last time you ran up a flight of stairs. How did you feel? You may have noticed your heart beating faster when you ran up a flight of stairs. The number of times your heart beats every minute is called your heart rate. Knowing your heart rate will help you know at what level you should exercise. For some people, walking will raise their heart rate to a good level for daily exercise. For other people, walking might not raise their heart rate high enough. Usually, you want to exercise at a level that your heart rate is higher than normal but you can still carry on a conversation.

### Measuring Your Heart Rate

Measuring your heart rate is a great way to make sure you are working out at the right level. A simple equation can help you find your “Target Heart Rate” zone.

1. First, calculate your **resting heart rate**. Your resting heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute before you begin your workout. This can be done in two ways:



Place the index and middle finger of your right hand on the left side of your left wrist and apply mild pressure until you find a beat.

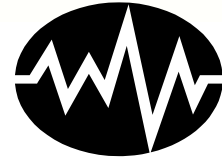
OR



Place the index and middle finger of your right hand to the right of the Adam's apple area and apply pressure until you find a beat.

*\*Caffeine, sleeping patterns, and stress may change your resting heart rate reading. Try to take your pulse first thing in the morning on a day you have gotten plenty of rest.*

2. Next you need to calculate your **target heart rate**. This is the number of times your heart should be beating per minute while you are exercising. There are two ways you can do this. You can use internet sources, which calculate your target heart rate for you or do a simple equation without the internet.



**Here are a couple internet target heart rate calculators:**

<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/healthtool-target-heart-rate-calculator>

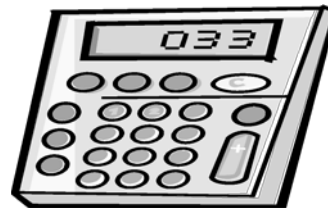
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/target-heart-rate/SM00083>

**Calculating your target heart rate yourself:**

Step 1: Take 220 minus your age.

Step 2: Multiply this number by the desired percentage (usually between 70-85%).

Step 3: This is your target heart rate!



Check your pulse right after your workout to ensure that you are working out at the right intensity, or somewhere in the 70 to 85% range.

As you get into better shape and increase your physical activity, your resting heart rate should decrease a small amount. Hopefully by the end of the 12-week challenge, you will be able to meet this goal of decreasing your resting heart rate.