

## **Fitness FOCUS...Heart Rate, How To Monitor**

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When you workout do you feel like you are in your zone? Are you working where you should be or just going through the motions? One of the ways you can be sure to stay on track during your workout is to monitor or track your heart rate. One very effective tool to help track your heart rate is a heart rate monitor. Adding a heart rate monitor to your workout can really mix it up.

Everyone has a heart rate zone that they can use as a tool to help get the most from their workouts. To calculate your HR zone you just need to know your age and your resting heart rate. The most common method is the Karvonen Formula.

$(220 - \text{your age} = x)$  and then  $X - \text{resting heart rate} = Y$

Resting Heart Rate: (take your heart rate 1 minute as soon as you get up (not to an alarm!))

$y @ 65%$  (low end of the HR zone) and  $y @ 85%$  (high end of the HR zone) and then add back in your resting HR.

For example if you had a person who is 35 years old, with a resting HR of 65, their zone would be:  $220 - 35 = 185 / 185 * .65\% = 120$  and  $185 * .85\% = 157 / 120 + 35 = 155$  (low end) and  $157 + 35 = 192$  (high end) **So their HR zone is 157 to 192.**

During a workout your HR varies through the different stages. One of the easiest ways to monitor your HR without stopping to actually take it is a Heart Rate Monitor. There are various models available on the market. Some that you can hook up to your computer and get a full detail description of that workout and others that simply track your heart rate and calories burned. While there are a lot of brands on the market, Polarusa.com has a great chart that breaks down each module and its' functionality and price.

Why monitor? While your heart is an organ it is also a muscle. Just like any other muscle in your body, if you don't use it you lose it. When you train in your HR zone you are increasing your hearts productivity and working your body more efficiently. It can also be a fun tool to use to spice up your workout. For example, you can train at the lower end of your HR zone for a longer period, for a fat burning workout. Or, if you have a limited amount of time for your workout you can train at the higher end of your zone for the similar results.

If you haven't ever used a HR monitor this might be a good tool to invest in. You don't need to change your workout method or invest in new equipment to mix it up, jut add a Heart Rate Monitor and see how you can enhance your current workout routine!