



## Heart Zone Training

We have all heard of it, we have known people that do it but what is it? Well as the name suggests heart zone training is a type of training that relates to how fast your heart is beating. If you know how fast your heart is beating you know how hard you are working and what benefits your body is receiving from the exercise.

So what really happens when your heart is at a certain rate? Well when we exercise we burn calories, what your heart rate decides is what sort of calories you will be burning, **fat** or **carbohydrate**. For your body to burn fat efficiently there must be enough oxygen present in the blood.

The simplest way to know if enough oxygen is present is if you are breathing steadily or if you can breathe through your nose during exercise. This would mean your heart is working at around 60-70% of its maximum; this zone is called your **fat burning zone**.

If you want to improve your fitness levels you need to overload your heart and ask it to work at a rate that it will struggle to maintain for a longer period of time. When overloading your heart you will notice your breathing rate increase, this is your body telling you that you don't have enough oxygen in your system and need more. When your body can't find oxygen to burn fat as energy it will begin to burn more carbohydrate due to the fact carbohydrate can burn with little oxygen present. When working at this intensity your heart rate will be between 80-100% of its maximum. It is not advisable to work near 100% of your maximum heart rate unless you seek professional advice first. When working in this zone you are working in your **cardio zone**.

Now we know what is happening in our heart when we exercise how do we measure it? Well you could stop and check your pulse regularly but this method is a little bit awkward when you're trying to exercise so the best and most accurate way would be with a heart rate monitor. Heart rate monitors vary in price and function but even the cheapest will do the job of measuring your heart rate. If you buy a slightly more expensive one they will calculate what zone you should be working in depending on

your goals. For those who would like to know how to calculate your own zones please read on.

There are two main methods you can use for this; the first method is an easier calculation but not quite as accurate:

**We assume the subject is 20 years old:**

$220 - \text{Age} = 200$  (Maximum Heart Rate MHR)

$200 \times 0.6$  will give us 60% = 120

$200 \times 0.9$  will give us 90% = 180

By doing this calculation you can see what beats per minute your heart should be doing depending what zone you wish to work in.

The next method is slightly more accurate and works on your resting heart rate which is a measure of your fitness levels:

To measure your resting heart rate effectively it is best to do it when you first wake up and don't sit up in bed. Measure your pulse for 60 seconds and do it three mornings in a row, then use the average.

**We assume the subject is 20 years old with a resting pulse of 55 (RHR):**

$220 - \text{Age} = 200$  (MHR)

$\text{MHR} - \text{RHR} = 145$  (Heart Rate Reserve HRR)

$145 (\text{HRR}) \times 0.6 = 87 + 55 (\text{RHR}) = 142$  (60% maximum heart rate)

$145 (\text{HRR}) \times 0.9 = 130 + 55 (\text{RHR}) = 185$  (90% maximum heart rate)

As you can see, because the 20 year old has a low resting heart rate and is therefore fitter this means that to get to a certain percent of their maximum heart rate the beats per minute need to be higher.

So there you have what your heart rate does, how to measure it and how to calculate your percentages. The learn how to implement this into your exercise goals please read the **Cardiovascular Training** article.

If you would like any further advice on this or any articles please contact [info@warehousefit.com](mailto:info@warehousefit.com)

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