



MEASURING YOUR RESTING HEART RATE

Your resting heart rate, or pulse, is a measure of how efficiently your heart works. The lower the resting heart rate, the stronger the stroke volume or the amount of blood that is pumped with each heart beat.

Although your resting heart rate is determined by many things you can't control (e.g., your age, medications, and medical conditions), you may be able to lower it through exercise. The heart is a muscle, and grows stronger with activity.

What is my resting heart rate?

You can measure your resting heart rate through two methods:

- ◆ Radial pulse: Use the tips of your index and third finger. Place them on the radial artery, located at the thumb side of either wrist. You should be able to feel it a little below the base of the thumb. Hold *gently*. Using a watch that is digital or has a second hand, count the pulse for 10 seconds, and then multiply that number by 6.
- ◆ Carotid pulse: Use the tips of your index and third finger. Place them just below the jaw, along the windpipe and along the throat. Use the fingertips of the first and second fingers to hold *gently*. Using a watch that is digital or has a second hand, count the pulse for 10 seconds, and then multiply that number by 6.

How hard should I exercise?

Start by figuring out what your maximum heart rate is, by subtracting your age from 220. For example, if you are 65 years old, your maximum heart rate is: $220 - 65 = 155$.

$$220 - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}.$$

(your age) (your maximum heart rate)

For most people, a good activity level is 65 to 80% of their resting heart rate. For example, if you are 65 years and your maximum heart rate is 155, your good activity level might be between 100 ($155 \times .65$) and 124 ($155 \times .80$).

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times .65 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

(your maximum heart rate)

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times .80 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Please keep in mind that these are general guidelines only, and may not be appropriate for you. Please check with your doctor to determine what a good activity level is for you.

If you can't comfortably carry on a conversation while you're exercising, you're probably exercising too hard.