

# Physical Therapy Update

## Monitoring Your Heart Rate for Safe Exercise ...

Knowing how to monitor your heart rate during exercise, and understanding the importance of exercising in a safe target heart rate zone is important when starting an exercise program for weight loss, management of blood pressure, or just to improve your overall cardiovascular health and wellness.

**Heart rate** is the average number of times your heart beats per minute; a heart beat is when the heart contracts to pump the blood through the vascular system. It can be monitored at the wrist at the radial artery or at the carotid artery in the neck most easily. **Resting heart rate** is the number of beats per minute while you are at rest. Your resting heart rate indicates your basic overall heart health and fitness level. The more conditioned your body is, the less effort it needs to make to pump the blood through your body.

**Maximum heart rate** is the highest number of beats your heart contracts during one minute. Max HR is a useful tool to measure training intensities and typically is used to measure or predict the level of exercise. It is important to measure your Max HR while doing exercises to ensure that you stay within a safe range. The American Heart Association recommends that you exercise at intensity between 60 percent and 85 percent of your Maximum HR in order to safely improve your cardiovascular health. In order to calculate what your **Age Adjusted Maximum HR**, use the following formula:

- $220 - (\text{your age}) = \text{Age Adjusted Maximum HR}$

To calculate a safe **Target Heart Rate Range** during exercise, use the **Age Adjusted Maximum HR** and multiply it by .6 and .85. For example:

- A 40 year old man would have an **Age Adjusted Maximum HR** of:  
 $\Rightarrow 220 - 40 = 180 \text{ beats per minute (bpm)}$



To calculate a safe **Target Heart Rate Range** use the following formulas:

- $180 \times .6 = 108 \text{ bpm}$        $180 \times .85 = 153 \text{ bpm}$
- *In order to improve cardiovascular health, this individual needs to exercise at a level to raise his heart rate to between 108 and 153 beats per minute.*

In general, lower intensity exercise helps your body to burn fat and calories, while higher intensity exercise improves stamina and improves overall conditioning.

As always, consult with a medical professional when starting any exercise program. If you would like additional information concerning an exercise program that is right for you, please call PHOENIX Rehabilitation in Williamsport at (570) 326-5729. Our experienced physical therapists would be happy to help you!

**PHOENIX Rehabilitation and Health Services**  
 816 Westminister Drive, Williamsport, PA 17701

Phone: (570) 326-5729

Nancy Wood, PT, MS, Facility Director

[www.phoenixrehab.com](http://www.phoenixrehab.com)

### Fitness Target Zones: Heart Rates

Exercise Level	Benefits	Intensity Level
Light Exercise	Healthy Heart Maintenance	50% - 60%
Weight Loss	Burn Fat & Calories	60% - 70%
Base - Aerobic	Increase stamina & endurance	70% - 80%
Conditioning	Fitness conditioning, muscle building, and athletic training	80% - 90%
Athletic - Elite	Athletic training and endurance	90% - 100%

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