



## Your Pulse and Your Target Heart Rate

### What Is Your Pulse?

Your pulse is your heart rate, or the number of times your heart beats in one minute. Pulse rates vary from person to person. Your pulse is lower when you are at rest and increases when you exercise (because more oxygen-rich blood is needed by the body when you exercise).

Knowing how to take your pulse can help you evaluate your exercise program.

**How To Take Your Pulse**1. Place the tips of your index, second, and third fingers on the palm side of your other wrist, below the base of the thumb. Or, place the tips of your index and second fingers on your lower neck, on either side of your windpipe. (*See the illustrations above.*)

2. Press lightly with your fingers until you feel the blood pulsing beneath your fingers. You might need to move your fingers around slightly up or down until you feel the pulsing.

3. Use a watch with a second hand, or look at a clock with a second hand.

4. Count the beats you feel for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by six to get your heart rate (pulse) per minute.

Check your pulse:  $\frac{\text{beats in 10 seconds}}{\text{beats in 10 seconds}} \times 6 = \frac{\text{your pulse}}{\text{your pulse}}$

What Is A Normal Pulse?	
Age Group	Normal Heart Rate at Rest
Children (ages 6-15)	70-100 beats per minute
Adults (age 18 and over)	60-100 beats per minute

### What Is Maximum Heart Rate?

The maximum heart rate is the highest your pulse rate can get. To calculate your **predicted maximum heart rate**, use this formula:

$$220 - \text{Your Age} = \text{Predicted Maximum Heart Rate}$$

Example: a 40-year-old's predicted maximum heart rate is 180.

Your actual maximum heart rate can be determined by a graded exercise test.

Please note that some medicines and medical conditions might affect your maximum heart rate. If you are taking medicines or have a medical condition (such as heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes), always ask your doctor if your maximum heart rate/target heart rate will be affected. If so, your heart rate ranges for exercise should be prescribed by your doctor or an exercise specialist.

### Target Heart Rate

You gain the most benefits and lessen the risks when you exercise in your target heart rate zone. Usually this is when your exercise heart rate (pulse) is 60 percent to 80 percent of your maximum heart rate. In some cases, your health care provider might decrease your target heart rate zone to begin with 50 percent.

Do not exercise above 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. This increases both cardiovascular and orthopedic risk and does not add any extra benefit.

Always check with your health care provider before starting an exercise program. Your health care provider can help you find a program and target heart rate zone that match your needs, goals, and physical condition.

When beginning an exercise program, you might need to gradually build up to a level that is within your target heart rate zone, especially if you have not exercised regularly before. If the exercise feels too hard, slow down. You will reduce your risk of injury and enjoy the exercise more if you don't try to over-do it.

To find out if you are exercising in your target zone (between 60 percent and 80 percent of your maximum heart rate), stop exercising and check your 10-second pulse. If your pulse is below your target zone (see the chart below), increase your rate of exercise. If your pulse is above your target zone, decrease your rate of exercise.

Age	Target Heart Rate (HR) Zone (60-85%)	Predicted Maximum Heart Rate
20	120-170	200
25	117-166	195
30	114-162	190
35	111-157	185
40	108-153	180
45	105-149	175
50	102-145	170
55	99-140	165
60	96-136	160
65	93-132	155
70	90-128	150
<b>Your actual values</b>	<b>Target HR</b>	<b>Max. HR</b>