

Monitoring Your Intensity Level



At xo fitness we use 4 Zones:

Zone 1: Easy Warm-up & Recovery

Zone 2: Challenging, but comfortable

Zone 3: Challenging, but *un*comfortable

Zone 4: Breathless; not maximum, but winded

There are many ways to monitor your intensity level. This method was developed by Nautilus Institute. Recent research indicates that this method might actually be one of the most accurate ways to monitor intensity because it takes into account each persons' individual differences in fitness, heart size and experience.

What about heart rate?

Some will insist that you need a heart rate monitor and need to workout in the correct heart rate zone. Heart rate zones are based on knowing what your maximum heart rate actually is, and that requires a physician administered 'maximal graded test.' The old formula $220 - \text{your age}$ is no longer considered an accurate predictor of what your actual maximum heart rate is.

We will sometimes have you use a heart rate monitor. This will be done to compare how you are feeling (which Zone you are in) to your heart rate. As you become more fit you will notice your Zone 3 heart rate will become your Zone 2 heart rate. For example, right now if we asked you to exercise at with your heart rate at 160 beats per minute you may feel as though this is very challenging and call it Zone 3, but when your heart becomes stronger you will more than likely feel 160 BPM is in Zone 2.

How about Rate of Perceived Exertion?

The "Rate of Perceived Exertion" scale asks you to rate how hard you are working on a scale of 1-10 or 6-20. This is a little closer to the zone method, but what is the difference between hard, very hard and extremely hard?