

ARE YOU WORKING OUT AT THE RIGHT INTENSITY

To get the most out of exercise, you should monitor your intensity throughout your workout. This will insure that you are working within your heart rate training zone, thus getting an effective workout without getting drained out. Working too hard could lead to injury and burnout while not working hard enough can lead to frustration when you don't see results. You may be huffing and puffing through your cardio workout, wondering if you're really doing yourself any good. Are you working too hard or not hard enough? You look



around. The person next to you has barely broken a sweat while the one in front is drenched from head to toe. Well, sweat may not be the best indicator of exercise intensity.

So how hard should the exercise be?

There are two ways of assessing this, i.e. the 'Talk Test' and the heart rate, Training Heart Rate. The simplest way is to use 'The Talk Test' which uses your ability to hold a conversation with someone as a measure of your exercise intensity. There are three levels:

Level 1 - If you can hold a conversation with someone quite easily, without feeling at all out of breath, you are not working hard enough. So try harder!

Level 2 - If you can hold a conversation, but feel a bit breathless, this is the correct intensity. So keep it up!

Level 3 - If you find it very difficult to speak at all, you are working too hard. Ease up!

So whatever physical activity you choose, Level 2 is where you should be. Moreover, you should feel pretty much back to normal within 10 minutes of stopping

exercise and, if you don't, you are pushing yourself too hard. The slightly more involved - but most accurate - indicator of exercise intensity is your Training Heart Rate, or pulse rate, expressed in beats per minute. Everyone has a maximum heart rate that is related to his or her age - the Age Predicted Maximum Heart Rate (APMHR). This is simply the fastest your heart can beat. A simple way to calculate your APMHR is to subtract your age from 220, i.e.

$$\text{APMHR} = 220 - \text{Age (in years)}$$

So if you are 50 years old, your APMHR is $220 - 50 = 170$ beats/minute. This means that however hard you exercise; your heart will not beat any faster than 170 beats/min. But how does this help in determining

exercise intensity? Scientific studies have shown that the intensity of effort required for effective aerobic training is in the range of 60 - 75 per cent of the APMHR. This 60-75 per cent heart rate range is called the Training Zone.

Many people hear about intensity and assume it means "spending more time at the gym," You do not get intensity with: More reps, more time, more exercises, or more weight, by definition, **intensity is "more effort in less time."** Intensity comes from focus. The degree of focused effort for a given muscle for a limited time will determine the level of intensity. Intensity involves a certain mind-body connection. It is both mental and physical. You literally have to feel the rep, feel the range of motion, and feel the stress on the muscles. But if you are doing the exercise just to get it done, you will not see good results.

Most people do low intensity workouts, Low Intensity fails as your body burns fewer calories at all times. This is exactly why you see so many overweight people on treadmills still struggling to lose weight. As a consolation, they are better off than those who don't exercise at all. But if you're going to exercise, why not do it right?

So remember working out with the utmost intensity is the deciding factor between getting results and wasting your time.