



Scale Up Your Exercise

Exercise is a key component to your overall heart health and wellness. Participating in a cardiovascular exercise program can increase your energy and stamina. It also can decrease your risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity on most, and preferably all, days of the week.

While putting in the time to exercise is important, monitoring how hard you’re working is a component that can help improve the efficiency of your exercise time.

One easy way to track your exercise effort is by using a Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale. RPE is a subjective measure of how hard you are working during physical activity. It is the preferred method for assessing exertion among individuals who take medications that affect heart rate or pulse. The scale is based on your elevated heart rate, increased breathing and muscle fatigue. During your activity, use an RPE scale to assign numbers to how you feel. Through your experience of monitoring how your body feels during exercise, it will become easier to know when to adjust your intensity. This will help you exercise within a range that’s comfortable but still requires you to safely exert yourself.



RPE SCALE	RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION
10 /	MAX EFFORT ACTIVITY Feels almost impossible to keep going. Completely out of breath, unable to talk. Cannot maintain for more than a very short time.
9 /	VERY HARD ACTIVITY Very difficult to maintain exercise intensity. Can barely breath and speak only a few words.
7-8 /	VIGOROUS ACTIVITY Borderline uncomfortable. Short of breath, can speak a sentence.
4-6 /	MODERATE ACTIVITY Breathing heavily, can hold short conversation. Still somewhat comfortable, but becoming noticeably more challenging.
2-3 /	LIGHT ACTIVITY Feels like you can maintain for hours. Easy to breathe and carry a conversation.
1 /	VERY LIGHT ACTIVITY Hardly any exertion, but more than sleeping, watching TV, etc.

Note: As always, consult your physician or other qualified health provider regarding questions you may have about your medical conditions or health objectives.

Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

