

FAQ's - POLAR Heart Rate Monitors

How do you determine how hard my son/daughter should be working?

The universal theme that we teach our students in PE about proper levels of intensity is exercising in an appropriate training zone, which measures your target heart rate. Your target heart rate isn't one rate but a range of rates (beats per minute, or bpm), expressed as percentages of your maximum heart rate, that are safe for you to reach during exercise. For most healthy people, the American Heart Association recommends an exercise target heart rate ranging from 50% to 80% of your maximum heart rate, which is normally calculated as the number 220 minus your age. So for our classes we begin with the formula 220 minus your age to equal maximum exercise heart rate. We then calculate our workouts based on what we want to accomplish. In District 127, the expectation is that all students will train in either the Fitness or Aerobic zones.

TRAINING ZONES

Healthy Heart Zone (Warm up) --- 50 - 60% of maximum heart rate: The easiest zone and probably the best zone for people just starting a fitness program. It can also be used as a warm-up for more serious walkers. This zone has been shown to help decrease body fat, blood pressure and cholesterol. It also decreases the risk of degenerative diseases and has a low risk of injury. 85% of calories burned in this zone are fats! Must increase the time of exercise with the lower intensity.

Fitness Zone (Fat Burning) --- 60 - 70% of maximum heart rate: This zone provides the same benefits as the healthy heart zone, but is more intense and burns more total calories. Like the heart healthy zone, the percentage of fat calories is still 85%. However, students must increase the time of exercise because of the lower intensity and this is sometimes difficult to do within a 50-minute class, which is why we also suggest some aerobic training.

Aerobic Zone (Endurance Training) --- 70 - 80% of maximum heart rate: The aerobic zone will improve your cardiovascular and respiratory system AND increase the size and strength of your heart. This is the preferred zone if you are training for an endurance event. More calories are burned in this zone, with 50% coming from fat.

Due to the time within a PE class, we are asking students to get a minimum of 130 bpm on average for 20 min. This is either 64 or 65% of their max heart rate for their age. Students must achieve 20 min in their target heart rate zone over the course of a 50 minutes class period. This allows them to take breaks if they choose. For optimal performance, students are encouraged to train in the Aerobic Zone as well, but it is not required.

Anaerobic Zone (Performance Training) --- 80 - 90% of maximum heart rate: Benefits of this zone include an improved VO₂ maximum (the highest amount of oxygen one can consume during exercise) and thus an improved cardiorespiratory system, and a higher lactate tolerance ability which means your endurance will improve and you'll be able to fight fatigue better. This zone will be used when we train for and run the mile, which is a mandated fitness test by the state of Illinois.

HRM grading is not fair for students that are out of shape and it is not equal?

Actually, this is contrary to the very purpose of heart rate monitors and the basics of calculating a target heart rate. Our heart rate monitors are set at a level that is consistent with and slightly below the recommendations of the American Heart Association, which for most students and aerobic workouts will be 130-160 beats per minute. This is equivalent to 64% to 80% of the maximum heart rate. A student that is in less cardiovascular shape will actually enter the zone at a faster rate than a student that is in shape. Polar heart rate monitors show your child the effect of any exercise on their body. This means you can objectively assess students of all abilities while safely motivating them with instant feedback on their activity.

HRM grading is not fair for students that are in good shape, as it is not equal?

As a department, we acknowledge that an elite cross country athlete may have to work a little harder to get into their zone than an out of shape student, or may need to pick different activities to achieve their target heart rate. What we hope is that over the course of the year, these requirements will help to improve the overall cardiovascular health of our students. The American Heart association does not differentiate between individual fitness levels in determining appropriate aged based exercise levels.

When students walk into a Life Fitness course, our goal is that they understand and learn ways to improve their overall wellness. Therefore, we want to challenge each student to maintain or improve his or her current level of overall wellness. Likewise, in math, to get the best benefit, students need to be challenged according to, not

regardless of, their math ability. With heart rate monitors, students are motivated, accountable, and safe during life fitness classes. The heart rate monitors provide valuable individualized data and goals for each student to reach. The teachers use the data provided by HR monitors to ensure the kids have an environment where it is possible to reach their goals and exercise safely.

Students participating in exercise sessions with heart rate monitors may notice very quickly that not every student is asked to do the same workload, e.g., laps around a track. The goal is to avoid over and under training of each individual. The teacher will educate the students on individual differences and work load vs. working within an individual's capacity. Students may accomplish varying workloads, e.g., laps, reps, etc., but we will keep the body's effort consistent. Student growth is the goal, and monitoring heart rate gives an objective measure of that growth.

How do heart rate monitors help students know they are exercising in the right heart rate zone?

The Polar Heart Rate Monitor

- Helps teachers educate the students to exercise in different heart rate zones which all give different benefits
- Gives students accurate real-time feedback on their exercise intensity
- Allows students to follow their fitness improvement

While heart rate monitors help your students find their personal exercise intensity, they also tell them what zone they should be exercising in for optimal results. Target heart rates and heart rate zones are calculated as percentages of the maximum heart rate (HR max) and are displayed on screen to keep your students on the right track. Polar heart rate monitors show your students the effect of any exercise on their body. This means you can objectively assess students of all abilities while safely motivating them with instant feedback on their activity.

Why do I have to buy a strap?

There are several reasons that we have gone to students owning their own heart rate strap.

Hygiene - we believe it is better for our students to use their own heart rate monitor than to have us clean them in between usage. This allows each student to ensure their personal strap is clean, and clean their own strap with cleaning supplies that are provided in class.

Lifelong Fitness - Our goal is to ensure that our graduates have a solid understanding and practical knowledge around health, fitness, and tools that can help them create a healthy lifestyle. Although using sports and activities for fitness is definitely part of the equation, understanding the role technology plays in personal fitness is a cornerstone of our LF philosophy. Our hope is that students may use this heart rate band to connect to their phones or other personal exercise equipment used outside of school. All health clubs have machines that are compatible with POLAR.

Safety - District 127 Life Fitness asks our students to perform at a high level of effort in regards to cardiovascular and strength training exercises. It would not be safe for our students to work at this level without a teacher monitoring their heart rate. Remember, our goal is not to be in the high intensity range every day for every workout. Therefore, when a student is exercising above their target HR, a teacher can provide feedback to help the student adjust their exercise level.

The HRM are not an accurate measure of my student's effort in class.

In our experience over the last eight years, we have found the transmitters do provide an accurate measure of a student's heart rate while exercising. This is not to say that there is never a malfunction, but usually our staff is able to fix the monitors so they work properly. If not, credit is given to a student who is making a good effort in class despite the malfunction.

Why does my child have to make up LF?

Per District 127 policy, even with absences that are excused, the work must be made up upon the students return to class. This policy allows our teachers to fairly assess our students and gives our students a chance to maintain or improve their overall wellness. We offer every student an opportunity to make up classes missed by wearing the heart rate monitor on Fridays. When the student reaches 20 minutes in their target heart rate zone, the makeup is complete and the student will receive credit for the day they missed. This policy is discussed on the first day of school and is included in all course syllabi. With any extended illness, we make every effort to deal with the situation fairly.