

Rating of Perceived Exertion scale

One way to see how much progress you're making in your physical activity is to measure the amount of effort you're making. Over time, the amount of effort it takes to do an activity should decrease. Once you've reached this point, you can gradually move on to more challenging activities.

The Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale will help you estimate how hard you're working (your activity intensity). Perceived exertion is how hard you think your body is exercising. Ratings on this scale are related to heart rate (how hard your heart is working to move blood through your body).

Here's how to use this scale:

- » While you're doing an activity, think about your overall feelings of physical stress, effort and fatigue. Don't concern yourself with any single thing, like leg pain or shortness of breath. Try to concentrate on your total, inner feeling of exertion.
 - » Find the best description of your level of effort from the examples on the right side of the table.
- » Find the number rating that matches that description. Add a zero to the end of the number rating to get an estimate of your heart rate during activity (also known as training or target heart rate).
 - » Typically, RPE ratings for activity in the target heart rate zone will be between 12 and 16. The shaded areas are the moderate activity zones.
 - » If your RPE for an activity decreases over time, you've improved your fitness level. Congratulations!



*trusted information
at your fingertips.*

An important part of being healthy is exercising regularly and staying active. PAL (Physical Activity Line) is a phone line, website and physical activity resource designed to help you make wise choices about physical activity so you can enjoy life to its fullest. PAL is brought to you by the CSEP Health and Fitness Program of BC and the Public Health Agency of Canada. PAL is operated by university/college-trained exercise professionals.



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BORG RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE) SCALE

Number rating	Verbal rating	Example
6		No effort at all. Sitting and doing nothing.
7	Very, very light	Your effort is just noticeable.
8		
9	Very light	Walking slowly at your own pace.
10		Light effort.
11	Fairly light	Still feels like you have enough energy to continue exercising.
12		
13	Somewhat hard	
14		Strong effort needed.
15	Hard	
16		Very strong effort needed.
17	Very hard	You can still go on but you really have to push yourself. It feels very heavy and you're very tired.
18		
19	Very, very hard	For most people, this is the most strenuous exercise they have ever done. Almost maximal effort.
20		Absolute maximal effort (highest possible). Exhaustion.

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Here are some other sheets related to this topic:

- Target heart rate zones.*
- Measuring your effort during activity.*
- How to calculate your training heart rate.*
- Exercise as preventive therapy.*
- Energy expenditure.*
- How much activity is enough?*
- Motivational and monitoring tools.*
- Definitions.*

Here's where to get any or all of these sheets:

tel: 1-877-725-1149
email: info@physicalactivityline.com
web: www.physicalactivityline.com

☛ *Here's the number to call if you have questions or want more information:*

Physical Activity Line

1-877-725-1149

The health information provided on this sheet is only a guide. You also need to rely on your common sense and good judgment. If you receive advice from a doctor or health professional that doesn't agree with the information provided here, follow the advice of your doctor or health professional since it's based on your specific history and needs.