

## Staying on the Right Track with an Exercise Program

### A. Follow the 4 Basic Principles

1. **Variety:** This helps prevent boredom. Try choosing different exercises everyday.
2. **Regularity:** Try to workout at the same time everyday. This way, your body knows what to expect. This also helps with planning exercise into your daily routine. If you absolutely can't workout at the same time everyday because your schedule changes so much, try to exercise at least during the same period (morning, noon, night) each day.
3. **No Excessive Overload:** Avoid workouts that are too vigorous; they could take a toll on your body! Muscles do not react well from being overworked; so if you are just starting to exercise after taking a long break from it, start SLOW and then progress. When strength training, never train the same muscles 2 days in a row. Lifting weights everyday is okay, as long as you are working different muscle groups on successive days (e.g. upper body one day, lower body the next.)  
**See below for a beginner's program and its progression.**
4. **Progression:** If just starting an exercise program, remember to start slow and increase gradually.

### B. Check your Intensity

1. **Target Heart Rate:** Most people can tell if they're working hard enough by checking their heart rate and comparing it to their "target heart rate". A simple calculation of your target heart rate involves multiplying your maximum heart rate (Max HR = 220-age) by a percentage between 50 (lower-limit rate) and 90 (upper-limit rate). For example, if you are a beginning exerciser, you might want to calculate a moderate intensity target heart rate; thus, you would multiply your Max HR by a percentage between 50% and 70%. A more advanced exerciser might use a more vigorous rate such as 75% or 80% of Max HR. Also, the better shape you are in (the more regular you are with your exercise), the more work you will have to do at a given workload to reach your target heart rate.
2. **Talk Test:** If your breathing rate is increased but you are still able to talk while you exercise, then this is an indication that you are active at a light to moderate intensity level. If you become out of breath so that you cannot converse, this is an indication of a vigorous intensity level. However, if you are able to sing while exercising, you are not working hard enough.
2. **Perceived Exertion:** Perceived exertion is a method used to determine how hard you are working without having to calculate your heart rate. The method relies on a person's observations of physical sensations while being physically active. Physical sensations include increased heart rate, breathing rate, perspiration, and muscle fatigue. The Borg Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale allows an individual to assign a number 6 through 20 to how they feel during physical activity. There is a high correlation between the person's perceived rating times 10 and the the person's actual heart rate. For example, an RPE of 11 (light exertion) corresponds with a heart rate of approximate 110 beats per minute.  
**See below for the Borg Perceived Exertion Scale.**

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## **BEGINNERS PROGRAM**

Cardio: 20-30 minutes of moderate exercise (bike, treadmill, or elliptical)

Resistance: 8-10 weight machines, performing 2 sets of 12, using light weight

(The weight machines should work all your major muscle groups, arms and legs)

\*Do cardio exercise 4-5 times per week and resistance twice a week. After 3-4 weeks of doing this beginners program, you can do the following advanced program:

## **ADVANCED PROGRAM**

Cardio: 30-45 minutes of moderate-vigorous exercise (same as beginners program, plus some exercise classes, swimming, stair master, etc.)

Resistance: 10-12 weight machines, performing 3 sets of 10, using medium weight (add 5-10 pounds to each machine used in the beginners program, and add a few new machines to your routine)

\*Do cardio exercise 5-6 times per week and resistance 3-4 times a week. Try this advanced program for 4-8 weeks, making sure to add variety. For a more advanced program, you can visit the Wellness Center in the REC and have a fitness consultant help you!

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## Borg Rate of Perceive Exertion Scale

6 - No exertion at all

7 -

8 - Extremely light (7.5)

9 - Very light (For a healthy person, like walking slowly at his/her own pace for some minutes)

10 -

11 - Light

12 -

13 - Somewhat hard but still feels OK to continue

14 -

15 - Hard (Heavy)

16 -

17 - Very hard (Is very strenuous. A healthy person can still go on, but he/she really has to push self. It feels very heavy, and the person is very tired.)

18 -

19 - Extremely hard (Extremely strenuous exercise level. For most people this is the most strenuous exercise they have ever experienced.)

20 - Maximal exertion

**Note: Practitioners suggest that RPEs of 12 to 14 indicate that physical activity is being performed at a moderate level of intensity.**