

## Using Heart Rate Monitors



### Why Use a Heart Rate Monitor?

A heart rate monitor lets you know how hard you are really working. It can be used to control the intensity of your activity and allow you to gauge if you are working at the appropriate intensity level.

### How Does It Work?

A heart rate monitor is a reliable and easy way of measuring your heart rate. You can read your heart rate from a receiver in the form of a wrist watch. This is picked up from the electrodes within a strap, worn around the chest. There is broad range of heart rate monitors available. Basic models offer a time display and constant heart rate while more costly heart rate monitors give detailed training zones readings, split times and come with downloadable software.

### How Do I Determine My Heart Rate?

Heart rate monitoring can assist you to achieve your goal by working at the optimal level. Training zones are guides to help you work at the optimal level and consequently achieve your training goal.

For example, a female student who is new to exercise would aim for a training zone of between 60-80% of her maximum heart rate. An elite 10K runner may be prescribed a heart rate training zone of 80-95% based on a lab/field test to determine the runner's maximum heart rate.

Maximum heart rate is the number of beats per minute in an active situation where heart rate would not increase any further.

Ageing reduces maximum heart rate by approximately 1 beat per min for every year from the age of 20. You can estimate your maximum heart rate using the formula:

MHR =  $208 - 0.70 \times \text{age}$     E.g. A 20 year old student would have a maximum heart rate of 194 beats per minute.

### Further Information

If you are considering using a heart rate monitor why not seek further advice from your fitness instructor or book in for a fitness assessment to get a prescribed training programme specific to your goals.