



Peak Heart Rate Challenge



Aim for 65% of maximum heart rate for several minutes daily to boost your cardiovascular health

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the Peak Heart Rate Challenge! Ready to transform your fitness routine and boost your heart health? This challenge is designed to help you exercise at 65% of your maximum heart rate, a sweet spot for improving cardiovascular endurance and burning calories efficiently.

For the next 3-weeks, we'll guide you through workouts aimed at reaching and maintaining this heart rate zone. By staying in this optimal range, you'll experience the benefits of steady, effective training without overexertion. Whether you're a fitness newbie or looking to mix up your workouts, this challenge will help you enhance your workouts and achieve your health goals.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEART RATE

How to find your pulse or heart rate

Wearable activity trackers make checking your pulse rate easy than ever. Don't worry if you don't have one, we have been checking pulse rates for centuries without them! Here are step-by-step instructions on how to locate and measure your heart rate.

1. Place your index and middle fingers lightly on the inside of your wrist, below your thumb.
2. Count your pulse for 30 seconds.
3. Multiply the number of beats you counted by 2 to get your heart rate in beats per minute.

It's important to note that certain medications can affect your heart rate. If you have a heart condition or take medication, consult your healthcare provider to determine your appropriate heart rate levels.

PEAK HEART RATE

How to calculate your maximum heart rate

At rest, your heart beats about 60-100 beats per minute. When you're exercise your heartbeat increases, to meet the rising demands of your body. Your maximum heart rate is the highest number of beats per minute that your heart can handle during exercise. To estimate this, people often use a **simple formula: subtract your age from 220**. For example, if you are 12 years old, your estimated maximum heart rate would be 220 minus 12, which equals 208 beats per minute.

But remember, this is just an estimate. Your actual maximum heart rate can vary. It's also important to note that this formula was made based on tests mostly done on men and might not be as accurate for everyone, especially women. Your target heart rate is a range based on a percentage of your maximum heart rate. Your target heart rate varies based on your fitness goals and can be loosely divided into 5 zones.

Learn more about the Training Zones

Your training zones measure how hard your body works during exercise, focusing on how it uses energy from stored carbohydrates (called glycogen) and fats. These zones range from Zone 1 (low intensity) to Zone 5 (high intensity). It's important to tailor your workouts based on these zones to reach your fitness goals effectively. Keep in mind, your zones are unique and can be influenced by factors like fitness level, age, and genetics.

This table outlines how each training zone affects your body and provides examples of exercises you can perform to target each zone effectively. As you will see in the table below, **Zone 2 is the target zone** for both improving your heart health and maintain a healthy weight by boosting your endurance and fat loss. Zone 2 exercise can also help to reduce the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, dementia and some cancers.

The Five Training Zones

Zone	Definition	% of Maximum Heart Rate	Benefits	Exercise Examples
Zone 1	Very light intensity where you can easily hold a conversation.	50%-60%	Promotes recovery and improves circulation	Walking, gentle yoga, light stretching
Zone 2	Light to moderate intensity where breathing is slightly deeper but still comfortable.	60%-70%	Enhances endurance and boosts fat burning	Jogging at a comfortable pace, cycling on flat terrain
Zone 3	Moderate to vigorous intensity where conversation becomes difficult.	70%-80%	Increases aerobic capacity and stamina	Tempo runs, brisk cycling or swimming
Zone 4	Vigorous intensity where you can only speak in short phrases.	80%-90%	Improves speed and overall fitness	Interval training, hill running, or cycling
Zone 5	Maximum effort where you cannot sustain exercise for long.	90%-100%	Builds peak performance and speed	Sprinting, HIIT, requiring bursts of maximal effort

PEAK HEART RATE

Develop your Zone 2 Training program

The research varies on the ideal length of time you should be spending on a Zone 2 workout, anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and half has been deemed the optimal time commitment. This challenge is designed to meet you at your current fitness level:

If you're a fitness newbie:

If Zone 2 training is new to you, it's better to start slowly and work your way up to 45-minute sessions.

- Week 1 – Aim for 10 minutes of Zone 2 exercise every day
- Week 2 – Aim for 20 minutes of Zone 2 exercise every day
- Week 3 – Aim for 3x 45-minute sessions of Zone 2 exercise this week.

If you are looking to challenge yourself:

If you already have a regular workout routine and are looking to extend your training schedule into Zone 2, start with 45-minute sessions and build to 1-hour workouts.

- Week 1 – Aim for 2x 45-minute sessions of Zone 2 exercise this week.
- Week 2 – Aim for 3x 45-minute sessions of Zone 2 exercise this week.
- Week 3 – Aim for 3x 1-hour sessions of Zone 2 exercise this week.

How will I know I'm in Zone 2?

Zone 2 exercise should be carried out at a 'conversational pace'. This can be measured using an easy trick called the 'talk test'. If you could easily describe your day to a friend while exercising, you're probably at the right level. You should be able to speak in full sentences without feeling breathless. If you find yourself pausing to catch your breath or feeling the need for a break, you're pushing too hard. However, it shouldn't feel too easy either—Zone 2 is more like a brisk walk or easy jog than a leisurely stroll. If you stop, you should feel like you've taken a break from activity. It should require some effort and concentration to maintain the pace.

Some examples of Zone 2 training include:

- Running
- Cycling
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Rowing
- Skating
- Rollerblading
- Walking your dog or walking with a friend

PEAK HEART RATE

THE CHALLENGE

Use the following chart to keep track of your progress over the next 3 weeks. Select one of the following goals and use the information above to help guide you in choosing workouts suitable to your level:

- Fitness newbie looking to build my endurance with Zone 2 training
- Active lifestyle, looking to challenge myself and switch up my workouts to see better results

Track your progress

Week	# of workouts	Average workout length	Type of workout (what activity?)	Did I meet my goal (Y/N)	Comments (How did it feel?)
1					
2					
3					

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

Congratulations on completing the Peak Heart Rate Challenge! Over the past three weeks, you've committed to tracking your workouts and optimizing your time spent in Zone 2. By diligently monitoring your heart rate and adjusting your workouts to meet your fitness level, you've taken significant steps towards improving your cardiovascular health and overall fitness.

How has focusing on your heart rate zones impacted your workouts and overall fitness? What improvements have you noticed in your endurance, energy levels, and recovery times? While this challenge may be over, you can continue to challenge yourself with new fitness targets and milestones.



Congratulations on completing the **Peak Heart Rate Challenge**

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

