

FREE

SPORTS CITY

September/October 1995

NEW YORK

Getting Fit

NYC Health Clubs:

Workout Super Highway

Biathlon Training

Urban In-line
Hockey

Running

Heart Rate Monitors Help Improve Your Performance

by Mindy Solkin

Competitive Runner, USA Track & Field Certified Running Coach and Creator of RunnerRobics

Successful running for competition, aerobic fitness and weight control consists of three exercise variables called the F.I.T. Formula. F.I.T. is an acronym for frequency, intensity and time. Frequency and time can be easily tracked using a calendar and a stop watch, but measuring intensity requires careful attention to your body, especially your heart rate.

For runner's seeking to set new P.R.'s (personal records), you need to train at the appropriate intensity of effort. The proper intensity is a percentage of your maximum heart rate (Max HR) which will give you a target zone. Since each individual's maximum target heart rate is unique, knowing your own numbers can assist you in reaching your goals.

Measuring Your Heart Rate

Checking your pulse manually by placing your first two fingers on the neck is common, but inaccurate, and the widely known formula, 220 minus your age, does not take into consideration your current fitness level.

There is an easier and more accurate way to measure your training intensity. By using a heart rate monitor, you can literally take the guess work out of your training. The ECG-accurate wireless heart rate monitor consists of a chest strap transmitter and a wrist-watch receiver. The transmitter detects the heart's electrical signal in the chest area. Electrical impulses are transmitted through the skin and picked up by rubber-covered sensors in the chest strap.

It is extremely accurate because it picks up your heart rate at its source.

The receiver displays a continuous numerical readout which tracks the heart rate beats per minute. You can set the monitor to represent the upper and lower numbers of your target zone. Running too fast or too slow, going above or below your zone, the monitor sounds a beep to remind you to back off or pick up the pace.

Determine your Max HR by checking your heart rate after running an all-out mile, or checking your highest heart rate during a race.

There are several companies who manufacture heart rate monitors. Polar Electro Inc., (800) 227-

1314, has seven monitors to choose from, including the Accurex Nightvision, which has a backlight for nighttime running and records up to 44 splits. Cardiosport, (800) 494-4320, also has a terrific line of monitors, including the lowest cost wireless monitor on the market. Other notable companies include Vetta (800) Go Vetta; Elexis Corp. (800) 327-1033; and Sensor Dynamics (800) 764-4327.

Mindy Solkin is a competitive runner and USA Track & Field certified running coach. She is the creator of RunnerRobics, a program of classes and clinics for runners, from one mile to the marathon. Currently, she is the running coach at Reebok Sports Club/NY and New York Sports Clubs. She can be reached at 279-3492.