

## Tracking Intensity

Tracking your intensity and effort during exercise ensures you are:

1. Improving the strength and circulation of your heart muscle
2. Exercising your heart safely within the prescribed exercise target range

### Effort

You can use a scale to track your effort. It is called the perceived rating of exertion scale. This scale helps you describe how you feel. You will use this scale to rate how much effort you are using during exercise.

| Scale     | Effort             | RPE Zones  |
|-----------|--------------------|--|
| <b>6</b>  | No exertion at all | <b>9-11:</b> For most people, this is walking at a slow pace. Your warm up and cool-down should fall in this zone.                                 |
| <b>7</b>  | Very, very light   |  |
| <b>8</b>  |                    | <b>Able to sing</b>  |
| <b>9</b>  | Very light         |  |
| <b>10</b> |                    | <b>12-13:</b> Somewhat hard exercise but still feels ok to continue. This is the intensity range you should aim for during your exercise sessions. |
| <b>11</b> | Fairly light       |  |
| <b>12</b> |                    | <b>Able to carry on a conversation</b>   |
| <b>13</b> | Somewhat hard      |  |
| <b>14</b> |                    | <b>14-17:</b> Very Strenuous. It feels like very heavy work and would make you tired.  |
| <b>15</b> | Hard               |  |
| <b>16</b> |                    | <b>Able to speak short sentences</b>   |
| <b>17</b> | Very hard          |  |
| <b>18</b> |                    | <b>Higher than 18:</b> For most people, this is the most strenuous exercise they have experienced.   |
| <b>19</b> | Very, very hard    |  |
| <b>20</b> | Maximal exertion   | <b>Unable to Speak</b>   |

During aerobic exercise, the best level for your RPE is between 12 and 13. You should slow down your exercise if you rate your RPE at 14 or higher.

### Remember: The Talk Test

If you **cannot** talk while you exercise, you are likely working **too** hard. If you can sing, you could likely work a little harder.

Slow down if you are having trouble breathing. This rule applies, even if you are within your prescribed exercise target.