

Is it bad to exceed my target heart...



Zack W 28 posts since

Dec 7, 2007

I work out regularly and have just started paying attention to my target heart rate. However, I often times exceed my target heart rate, but I feel great while I'm working out. Is this ok to do?

Tags: safety, exercise, work-out, gym, heart-rate, heart-rate-monitor, working-out, target, z-weans, zack-w



LivinFit 12 posts since

Jan 23, 2008 1. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out? Jan 24, 2008 1:32 PM

If you have no current health conditions...why not?! Something you should definitely confirm with your doc if you worried about it...good luck!



culinarydoctor 77 posts since

Oct 31, 2007 2. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out? Jan 31, 2008 8:25 AM

Max Heartrate = 220 - age



durtlover 1 posts since

Dec 15, 2007 3. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out? Feb 23, 2008 7:31 AM

I asked one of the cardiologists I work with that question and he said "no, it's not bad, but it's not any better. " Dr. Cooper, also a cardiologist,

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of Cooper aerobics says as we continue to run and our hearts become more accommodating, it's normal to exceed the current heart

rate formulas. The heart is a muscle and responds to whatever we do as a muscle does. You might want to check Cooper aerobics website

for more on that thought.



[carolynintoronto](#) 1 posts since

Mar 22, 2008 4. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Mar 22, 2008 10:36 AM

220 - age does not always give you an entirely accurate heart rate - it's an estimate. Unless you have tested your maximum heart rate, you may not be exceeding your heart rate. And your precise maximum heart rate changes depending on the activity.

For example, I'm in my thirties, and when I swim (generally lower heart rate) I can maintain a heart rate greater than 190 for many minutes. I'm not really exceeding my maximum heart rate - I can talk right away when I stop, and recover quickly. I'm not working harder than my lanemates with lower heart rates, either.

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If you're still able to speak at this higher heart rate, you're probably within your training zone. If not, well, maybe you're pushing it too hard. But don't let the heart rate trick you - your range may differ from the average for your age.



[Megsbee](#) 3 posts since

Oct 30, 2007 **5. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 3, 2008 2:16 PM

Here's a web site that gives coaching advice based on heart rate... you might want to check it out. www.numetrex.com/coachscorner



[Eco13](#) 56 posts since

Feb 18, 2008 **6. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 3, 2008 4:28 PM

Hi Zack, Thank you for asking this question as I was wondering this myself. My problem is that I have a chronic rapid heart beat (tachycardia) which is somewhat controlled with medicine. Even so, my resting heart rate is about 90. I've been exercising pretty vigorously since the end of October 2007 and I ALWAYS exceed my target heart rate while exercising. In fact I very often exceed my "maximum" heart rate, which according to the common formula is $220 - 40$ (my age) = 180. I usually get up to about 183. So far I haven't encountered any serious problems, although a couple of times I found it difficult to catch my breath and had to wait while the rest of the exercise group continued on. Still, I would have thought that my resting heart rate would have gone down as I got into shape.



[Eco13](#) 56 posts since

Feb 18, 2008 **7. Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 7, 2008 1:16 PM

in response to: [Eco13](#)

I hope I didn't kill this thread...I was looking forward to more information from my fellow Active members. ?:|


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Bump.



[Zack W](#) 28 posts since

Dec 7, 2007 8. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 10, 2008 7:40 AM

 in response to: [Eco13](#)

This was great. Thank you for all the helpful information. I wasn't going to ask, but I'm glad I did. I appreciate it.

Eco13, I hope someone will be able to answer your question for you also. Anyone have any answers?

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[K64](#) 13 posts since

Feb 7, 2008 9. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 18, 2008 7:26 PM

[↑](#) in response to: [Eco13](#)

ECO - you're throwin' around some medical words and mentioning medication. This raises some concerns for pushing your heart rate too high. Allow me to offer a few medical thoughts on this.

As others on this thread have pointed out, the "max heart rate" is just a guideline and everyone is different. Going 183 instead of 180 is generally not an issue, nor is going 195 if that's what your body does and you feel ok while doing it.

When we talk about these rates, we're assuming a normal "sinus" rhythm (exercise induced sinus tachycardia to be precise). The electrical impulse to trigger the heart beat starts in the top of the heart in the 'sinus node'.

There are people who's hearts will start to add beats when things get reved up, beats that don't come from the 'sinus node'. They going into a different cardiac rhythm (ventricular tachycardia or a re-entry tachycardia/PSVT or other scary rhythms) that can originate in a different part of the heart and leading to a short circuit type of thing.

If you have a history of an abnormal rhythm, you need to talk with your doctor before intense exercise. If you are feeling like your heart jumps from a semi-normal to a super fast rate all of a sudden, or if you feel like you might pass out or feel bad in some other way, you need to slow down and then go see a cardiologist.

Regards,

DK, MD

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[Eco13](#) 56 posts since

Feb 18, 2008 10. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 18, 2008 4:37 PM

in response to: [K64](#)

DK, thank you for your response and information. I did see my doctor recently and did mention that I had been exercising regularly since Oct 2007, but honestly I don't recall if I mentioned the fact that a couple of times I had problems catching my breath. Some time ago my doc recommended me to a cardiologist, who in turn recommended I go through a procedure similar to an angiogram in which a small wire is threaded through a vein in my leg to the heart, where a sensor could determine where the "miss-fire" is happening, and then they could cauterize that portion of the heart. I was not at all thrilled about undergoing this procedure, and as it turned out my insurance denied it because it was considered "experimental." I've since been told by another doctor that as long as the condition is controlled by the meds, I should be fine and not to worry about that procedure.


Since it looks like you're an MD, I can tell you that the name of the condition (please pardon my spelling) is paroxysmal atrial tachycardia. I'm pretty good about communicating any problems with the exercise coaches, so I think I'll be OK. The can't-catch-my-breath thing usually happens on foggy or wet days when there is a lot of moisture in the air. Don't know if the moisture has anything to do with it, but maybe I'm not getting enough oxygen on those days?



[K64](#) 13 posts since

Feb 7, 2008 11. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 18, 2008 7:22 PM

Is it bad to exceed my target heart...

 in response to: [Eco13](#)

Hi Eco (and others interested in this topic)

Fascinating! Interesting stuff, isn't this??

Allow me to provide definitions for this discussion:

Dysrhythmia - a messed up rhythm (simple enough, just a fancy word)

Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT):

Paroxysmal ("it just happens all of a sudden")

Atrial ("top part of the heart" and the origin for this dysrhythmia)

Tachycardia ("fast heart rate")

The first step in diagnosing a dysrhythmia like this is to be hooked up to a heart monitor.

Of course, your heart might not cooperate and show the problem while hooked up to a monitor, so people often have to wear a Holter monitor for 24+ hours. This is a recording device, similar to a polar heart rate monitor, but it actually records the rhythm, too, not just the rate.

I presume you've done this already. Otherwise, you wouldn't have a specific diagnosis (PAT) and no one would have suggested to you to have the electro -physiology study (EP study). The EP study is when they poke you in the femoral area and run the catheter up to your heart. They can map out some of the conduction paths in your heart and, as you mentioned, sometimes cauterize the path that's triggering the dysrhythmia.

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I am a board certified Emergency Physician, I am not a cardiologist or an electro physiologist (a subspecialty of cardiology), so I don't know at which point you should pursue the EP study or have a path cauterized. I tend to agree with the idea that if the meds are controlling things and your cardiologist doesn't think it's dangerous, then hell... don't do it. I would talk to a cardiologist or an electro physiologist about this stuff.

I strongly disagree with your insurance company for saying it's experimental. It's not. It's been done for years and is the standard treatment now for certain dysrhythmias.

There can be more to the evaluation of a patient with a dysrhythmia. Sometimes other things going on with the heart that lead to these dysrhythmias. Sometimes people need an MRI of the heart to assess the heart tissue and check for changes in tissue.

And lastly, regarding the feeling you get when you can't catch your breath on foggy days, perhaps your heart is fine, but your lungs have a harder time in the moist environment? Albuterol, a broncodilator could help there, but it could, and likely would, exacerbate the tachycardia. Talk to your doctor.

Clearly, much of this is beyond what can be covered here. My goal is to simply offer a little clarification and the vocabulary so you and others can both research more on these issues and speak more with your doctors or cardiologists.

Bottom line again: Some weird heart rhythms are bad. The heart rate, how you got there (heart rate jumped up all of a sudden?), and how you feel all need to be considered when deciding who should pursue further evaluation, but the heart rate alone tells us little. And for those who don't have a funny rhythm, exceeding the "max heart rate" is probably just fine (remember that original question?? 🤔)

DK, MD

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wawaski 20 posts since

Jul 9, 2007 12. Re: **Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 19, 2008 2:38 AM

Hi to all..a bit "off subject" here, but caught the shortness of breath thing and wanted to make everyone out there of what I ran into last year. A roadie that kept getting "spanked" by women older than I, so I took my bruised ego to the Doc. He did a pulse ox test a promptly sent me to a resp. specialist. After a zillion tests, said my ox levels were running between 86-96% with unk causes and sent me to a cardiac specialist. He did the other zillion tests and came to the same conclusion with no suggestion as to what it might be. Deep breath here. So, I got both my bloodwork tests and looked them over and saw that the B12 levels were extremely low, followed that info to some symptoms of same and there, lurking in the shadows was "shortness of breath". amopung other things. So you take the syptom, add the lack of diagnosis, and the low levels and march into your orig. Docs office who suggests 1ml of B12 a mo for 6 mos, and presto, problem solved.

Seems you have to be your own "Doc" every once in a while....I was told the blood work was "fine", and after another look was told, "hmmm, B12 levels are extremely low. Geeze. Anyway, keep your eyes open to all options, some are pretty obscure! By the way, last pulse ox test was 100 %!

Stuck in the middle of nowhere.....:p

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[Eco13](#) 56 posts since

Feb 18, 2008 13. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Apr 21, 2008 12:26 PM

in response to: [wawaski](#)

W
awaski, thanks for the info. Very interesting! I will certainly ask the question about B-12 the next time I see the doc.

By the way - Zack (the original poster, hehe), sorry I sent this thread off on a tangent. How have you been doing? Still feeling good while exercising?



[cpcutx](#) 1 posts since

Mar 13, 2009 14. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Mar 13, 2009 5:59 AM

in response to: [Eco13](#)
K64 and all:

This was a great discussion. K64...I handle medical malpractice claims (defending doctors and hospitals), and I can tell you that you are exactly the kind of physician witness we (and juries) love. Your explanation was very well written, thoughtful, and easy for anyone to understand...you should consider being an expert witness.

To add to these questions, one other factor in causing a high heart rate during exercise is your location. When I lived in UT, my heart rate was always around 200-210+ when I ran, and I was able to run for 3+ hours. When I moved to Dallas, TX, and took the fitness

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test for the police department, they put me on a treadmill. Before doing so, they took my resting heart rate (48). I was on the tread mill for 2 minutes @ 5 mph, hardly breathing, and definitely not sweating. The elevated the treadmill to 3 degrees, and my heart rate immediate shot up to 200. The nurses rushed me over to a bench and had me lay down (remember, I wasn't breathing any harder than I usually do while resting...and I had been running 40-50 mile/wk in UT). Anyway, after 60 seconds, my heart rate was 82 and after 2 minutes it was 64. They had me go to the in-house doctor who explained to me that heart rate is a function of oxygen deprivation. Since I had been training vigorously at altitude, it is to be expected that I would a) have a much more rapid heart rate to compensate, and b) have an enlarged heart (something common with athletes). He explained that if I had been left on the treadmill, that my body would have quickly realized that I wasn't ramping up (like at altitude), and my heart rate would have backed down on it's own...that's why I recovered so quickly.

As for shortness of breath, I totally agree with the B12, but if that is not an issue, check your intake of caffeine and also aspartame (nutrasweet). Caffeine has many different effects. For one, it is a diuretic and can cause dehydration, which adds stress to things like the heart and lungs, reducing their efficiency. The aspartame is very, very, very, very bad stuff. The first few times I drank anything with it, I coughed and wheezed all day. This is a known side effect of this drug...yes, drug. Unlike things like Splenda and Nu Stevia (natural 0 carb sweeteners), this stuff is made in a lab. Another real nasty thing that most of us consume unknowingly is corn syrup. This substance (used as a sweetener and preservative) has the highest glycemic index response of any substance...much higher than sugar. After getting on the Atkins diet years ago, I discovered I had a corn allergy. When I cut out the corn and corn derivative products, my stress induced (from exercise) asthma, eczema, and frequent upset stomach issues all resolved. Watch what you drink, and read the labels on EVERYTHING you buy. The more "natural" foods you eat the better, and with veggies, steam them so they stay just a little crisp...we Americans always overcook everything.

Oh, one more thing. For you heart, eat oats at least 4 times per week (Cheerios or oatmeal), and eat onion and peppers after any heavier meal. Onions have been proven to lower our heart rate significantly.

Hope this helps.



High Performance Fitness 8 posts since

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Jan 11, 2008 15. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** May 6, 2009 2:46 PM

Any exercise program should be discussed with your doctor first and sometimes these types of issues can be avoided. If this problem is new and the doc tells you to continue, you should log your workouts, speed, heart rate as well as how you feel. This is very helpful for you and your doctors. Feelings are very subjective so when you say you feel great, do you mean you are not tired or winded? Does that mean the blood flow and release of endorphins have given you a state of euphoria? Feeling good from the neck up sometimes masks the heavy feelings below. If you workout regularly, you are probably in no danger.

I would still talk to the doc...and start keeping track of my workouts. Adaptation to cardio includes lowered hr resting, during, and faster recovery. You should see that in your log. Good Luck!



waxjob 1 posts since

Jun 3, 2009 16. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Jun 3, 2009 3:17 PM

I hear this question all the time and the answer is obvious. Have you ever watched a hockey game or a soccer match and seen the coaches vigorously signalling to the players to slow down as they are approaching 80% of their maximum heart rate? How about the boxers...how often do the trainers tell them to stop punching the other guy so often as they are likely exceeding their comfort zone?

Here's my guideline...Work out hard...if you faint, that's too hard.

I'm 57 and have exercised all my life. I do 45 minutes a day 7 days a week at between 156 and 164 bpm, which by the way, is the same rate I used to do when I was 40. When I run marathons, I slow it down a bit because let's face it, 26 miles is a hellofa long way.

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Oh, and if your interested, the entire maximum heart rate thing is a result of a bit of mathematical fun by two researchers. Here's the link to the lads who came up with the concept and the rationale behind it. Evidently, they still get a laugh out of it when it's cited as fact!

<http://www.thefactsaboutfitness.com/research/max.htm>



SO1SEALInstructor 17 posts since

May 23, 2009 17. **Re: Is it bad to exceed my target heart rate while working out?** Jun 5, 2009 7:38 PM

Why do people care what their heart rate is? If you are overseas lugging gear and wounded are you gonna stop and say 'hey guys we gotta slow down my heart rate is too high'? If you are in good shape your resting heart rate is x if you are i great shape your resting heart rate is y. Its a gauge of your fitness not a measurement of your workout. You are doing sprints- you do them fast based on your ability not bpm. For someone who needs to pass the pst for him he may exceed x amount of bpm to pass should he stop and say hey instructor my heart rate is too fast? bottom line dont pay attention to that stuff, workout hard on hard days and the long days just go out long to the best of your ability you body will take care of the rest. heart rate is a correlete of fitness and should not be used to measure intensity.

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