

“Exercise should be regarded as a tribute to the heart”

Gene Tunney

In this month's newsletter:

Exercise and Your Heart Rate Training Zones

Blood Pressure and Your Health: Know Your Numbers Week 2021

Fact & Tip of the month



Exercise and Your Heart Rate Training Zones

In light of National Fitness Day, taking place on 22nd September 2021, we wanted to take a look at our heart rate training zones during exercise and what they actually mean.

Heart rate training zones are a method of improving your fitness, based on maintaining a heart rate goal for the duration of a workout. For example, if your goal is to improve your cardiovascular fitness, you would aim for around 75% of your maximum heart rate (MHR). But how can these heart rate zones help the average exerciser (after all, as much as we all like to think we're professional athletes after completing our first 5k run, we're not!), and what should we be looking for?

What is a Heart Rate Training Zone?

The most common, and simplest formula to calculate your maximum heart rate is 220 minus your age. So, a 35-year-old would have a maximum heart rate of 185 ($220 - 35 = 185$). However, using this formula does not account for your personal level of fitness as individual resting heart rate varies between people. Resting heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute when you're still and well-rested. Typically, resting heart rate ranges from 60-100 bpm, but the rate can vary based on age and fitness level.

There are then three heart rate training zones that you can aim to work within when you exercise, with each one having its own benefit.

Fat Burn

Intensity: Moderate – 50-69% of your maximum heart rate

Benefit: Builds aerobic endurance and teaches the body to burn fat as fuel

*Exercise example: walking, a leisurely swim, or a steady bike ride

Cardio

Intensity: Hard – 70-84% of your maximum heart rate

Benefit: Builds cardiovascular fitness and muscle strength

*Exercise example: running, fitness classes, strength training workout at the gym, most sports

Peak

Intensity: Vigorous – 85-100% of your maximum heart rate

Benefit: Increases performance speed

*Exercise example: HIIT, sprints, and other intensity interval exercises

*these are examples only and heart rate training zones will vary from person to person in each exercise mentioned.



Physical Activity and Our Health

Well, we all know that exercise is important. But many of us still don't meet the recommended guidelines.

In fact, only 6 in 10 adults currently achieves the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week. 24.6% of adults in England are currently classed as inactive, meaning over 11 million people are doing less than an average of 30 minutes activity a week.

Government guidelines state that being active reduces your change of type-2 diabetes by 40%, cardiovascular disease by 35%, joint and back pain by 25%, colon and breast cancers by 20% and can reduce the risk of mental illness by 30%.

But how is this relevant to the workplace?

Adults who spend 8 hours a day sitting (such as those in a desk/office job) are up to 60% more likely to die early from diseases such as cancer and heart disease. But this risk is reduced with regular, moderate physical activity.

Physical activity may also help to flush bacteria out of the lungs and airways, reducing your chances of getting a cold, flu, or other illnesses and therefore also decreasing workplace absenteeism

2019 research found that if the recommended physical activity guidelines were met globally, it could make employees up to 5 days more productive each year and boost the world economy by an estimated \$100bn a year.

So, as individuals, it's our own responsibility to ensure that we're meeting the physical activity guidelines to ensure that we keep our risk of fatal diseases as low as possible. But could employers own some of this responsibility to boost workplace productivity and decrease absenteeism?

At Healthy Performance, we make this easy for organisations by hosting health promotion days that include physical activities such as company sports days, reaction walls, smoothie bikes, wii fit games and more.

To find out more please visit: <https://www.healthyperformance.co.uk/workplace-wellness-challenges/>



Blood Pressure and Your Health: Know Your Numbers Week 2021

The 6th-12th September 2021 is 'Know Your Numbers!' week. A week long campaign that raises awareness of high blood pressure, encouraging all UK adults to get a blood pressure check. But what exactly is blood pressure and what are the effects on our health?

What exactly is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood within the arteries and is produced primarily by the contraction of the heart. We usually measure blood pressure through the large arteries in the upper left arm using a blood pressure cuff and either a stethoscope or machine and its measurement is recorded by two numbers. The first is measured after the heart contracts and is highest and is known as systolic pressure. The second is measured before the heart contracts and is lowest and is known as diastolic pressure.

What does systolic and diastolic mean?

Systolic pressure is the reading of your heart contracting and pumping the blood out to the body. The systolic reading is the top number on your blood pressure readings and should be the higher number as more force is generated by contraction than relaxation in a healthy heart.

Diastolic pressure is the pressure of the heart relaxing and refilling between beats. This is the time where blood re-oxygenates by filling with new blood from the lungs. Diastolic pressure is the bottom number on a blood pressure reading and should be a lower number than the systolic pressure reading.

What should my blood pressure reading be?

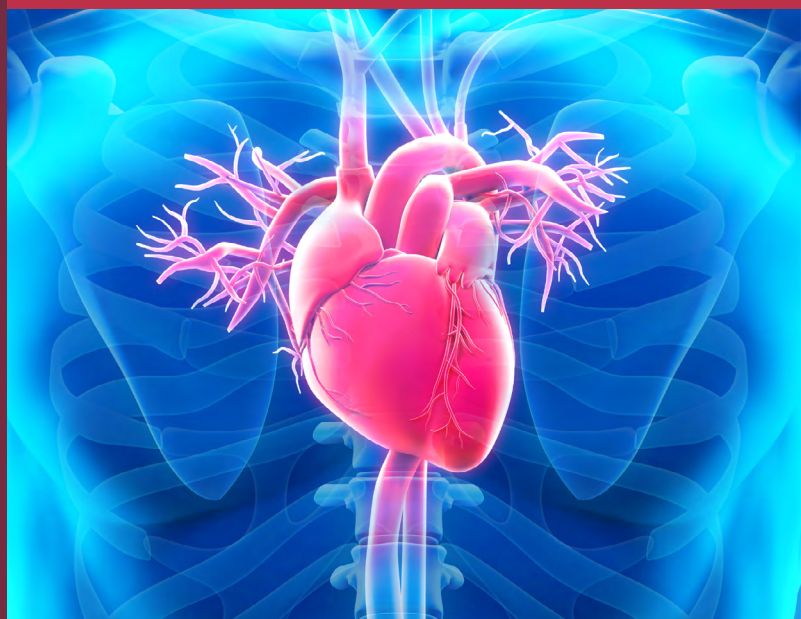
According to the NHS, the ranges for ideal blood pressure are:

- Low blood pressure (hypotension): 90/60mmHg or lower
- Ideal blood pressure: between 90/60mmHg and 120/80mmHg
- Borderline high blood pressure: between 120/80mmHg and 140/90mmHg
- High blood pressure (hypertension): above 140/90mmHg

The facts and figures

So, now that we've covered what blood pressure is, what are the essential statistics on high blood pressure in the UK? According to Blood Pressure UK:

- High blood pressure is the third biggest risk factors for all disease after smoking and poor diet
- Around one in three adults in the UK has high blood pressure. In England, 31% of men and 26% of women have high blood pressure
- Half of people with high blood pressure are not diagnosed or receiving treatment. In England alone, there are more than 5 million people that are undiagnosed
- Every 10mmHg reduction in systolic blood pressure reduces the risk of major cardiovascular events by 20%
- Each 2mmHg rise in systolic blood pressure is associated with a 7% increased risk of death from coronary heart disease and a 10% increased risk of death from stroke



Blood pressure associated health risks

The most common issue that people experience with their blood pressure is high blood pressure – also known as hypertension. This is when the heart is exerting too much force than is ideal to pump blood around the body. High blood pressure rarely has noticeable symptoms but when left untreated, it could increase a person's risk of developing long term health problems such as heart attacks, kidney disease or strokes.

Regular blood pressure testing can highlight any abnormalities or changes to blood pressure over time.

The cause of high blood pressure can vary from person to person; however, some common causes include:

- Aged 65+
- Overweight
- Of African or Caribbean descent
- High stress levels
- Lack of exercise
- High alcohol or caffeine intake
- Consuming too much salt
- Not eating enough fruit and vegetables
- Smoking
- Poor sleep

However, it's not all bad news!

Even if you're diagnosed with high blood pressure, or are at risk of high blood pressure, it doesn't mean that it must stay that way or that you will even develop it. The most common treatments for those with high blood pressure are lifestyle changes and/or medication.

By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, you can lower your risk and even reduce an already high blood pressure. A healthy lifestyle is one that consists of; regular exercise or physical activity, reduced sedentary time, losing weight if overweight, not smoking, low/no alcohol, and a healthy balanced diet.



Tip of the month

When exercising, physical changes don't happen overnight. Be consistent and you will see results.

Where can I get my blood pressure tested?

At Healthy Performance, we carry out Onsite Employee Health Assessments, all of which include a blood pressure reading. Our team of qualified healthcare professionals can identify high and borderline high blood pressure readings and can provide recommendations for lifestyle changes or make GP referrals in urgent cases.

To find out more about our Onsite Health Assessments, please visit <https://www.healthyperformance.co.uk/employee-health-checks/>

You can also get your blood pressure tested through your GP surgery and some pharmacies.

For more information and advice on blood pressure:

- **Speak to your GP if you are concerned about you blood pressure or risk of developing it.**
- **For general information go to the British heart foundation website bhf.org.uk**
- **Support and advice from other people suffering with high blood pressure join healthunlocked.com**
- **Or call the British heart helpline on 0300 330 3311 to speak to a cardiac nurse for more information and support.**



Fact of the month

A daily serving of kiwi can reduce blood pressure in people with mildly elevated levels.