

Monitoring Intensity Guide

Information for patients

How do I know if I'm working too hard or not hard enough?

Use of the Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale

In Cardiac Rehabilitation we use the rating of perceived exertion or RPE scale to determine how hard you feel the exercise is. We ask you to select a number between 6 and 20 based on your overall physical effort, breathing and muscle fatigue. See the scale and illustrations below of what we equate these levels to.

Rating of Perceived Exertion Borg RPE Scale			
6	Very, very light	How you feel when lying in bed or sitting in a chair relaxed. Little or no effort.	
7			
8			
9			
10	Very light		
11	Fairly light		
12	Somewhat hard		
13			
14			
15			
16	Hard		
17	Very hard	How you feel with the hardest work you have ever done.	
18			
19			Very, very hard
20			Maximum exertion
		Don't work this hard!	

Ideally

- We are looking to achieve a moderate intensity for you.
- When warming up and cooling down we would like you to feel around number 11.
- For the main workout we would be aiming for between 13 and 14.
- If it starts to feel more difficult i.e. higher up the scale, then slow the pace or lower the resistance until you feel more comfortable.
- In simple terms: if you can sing a song while exercising you are not working hard enough, and if you cannot hold a conversation you need to slow down.

Remember

- Don't begin to exercise if you feel unwell.
- Don't continue to exercise if you have chest pain, nausea, dizziness, unusual joint pain, become very breathless, or cold and clammy.

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 612440.