



How to Choose a Heart Rate Monitor

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Purchasing a heart rate monitor is a lot like making the buying decisions about any electronic device – computer, PDA, or mobile phone. When you begin the shopping quest, you need to decide on what functions, the internal operating activities, of the monitor that you choose. You also need to decide on what features, the external operating activities that work for you.

First, you decide on what your needs and wants might be by answering the questions that follow. Second, go to the "Heart Rate Monitor BUYERS Chart" below and circle the functions and features that match your need and wants. Finally, checkout the heart rate monitors in our [store](#) to find the monitor that meets those specifications and fits your budget.

To begin, answer these questions:

1. What features do I need now?
2. What functions do I need now?
3. How may my needs grow?
4. What is my budget?
5. How much memory and programming of the monitor am I willing to do?
6. Are maintenance, repair, and warranty issues important?
7. Do I need to download my data into a computer or do I want playback the data on the monitor?
8. Am I the kind of person who wants a plug-and-play monitor with one or less buttons because I just want to put it on and use it without programming the monitor before each workout?
9. Am I going to take the time to learn how to use my monitor, to read the User's Guide, and enjoy information like recovery heart rate, time in zones, heart zones points, or heart rate lap data?
10. Am I a gadget gal or guy who loves all of the bells and whistles of this personal training tool?



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Heart Rate Monitor Buyer's Chart©

Watch Function	Heart Rate Functions	Recording Functions	Types of Downloadable Monitors	Types of Transmission	Types of Monitors	Features
Time of Day	Current heart rate	Peak heart rate	Manual Recall	Digital	Cycling Monitors*	Replaceable battery
Stopwatch	Zone alarm: audible or visual	Time in Multiple Zones	Infrared	Analog	Horse Monitors	No chest strap required
Wake up Alarm	Ceiling and Floors Setting	Estimate: fat burning	Sonic Link	Coded Analog	Weight Loss Monitors	Waterproof
Count-down Timer	Time in Zone (s) Memory	Time Above 1 Zone	Interface Box	Infrared	Fitness Monitors	Multiple display options
Count-up Timer	Average Heart Rate	Time Below 1 Zone	Two-way linking		Swimming Monitors	Easy to read digits
Backlighting	Peak heart rate	Lap (s) timing with heart rate**			Stress Monitors	Wireless transmission
Calendar	Within zone bar	Total exercise time			Athlete's Monitors	Toggle between audible/silent alarm modes
Water resistant	Calorie estimation, cumulative calories	Display workout results as bar graph or profile graph			Motivation Monitors	Comfortable and cosmetic designs
Single and cumulative exercise time	Heart Zone estimation	Interval settings with and without heart rate			Runner's Monitors	Backlighting
	Oxygen consumption (O ₂) estimation	Recording rates for heart rate samples				Fitness Tests
	Recovery Features	Memory time interval settings (5, 30, 60 sec)				User's personal Information: ID, name, logo
	Switch function mode by touch to transmitter	Recording altitudes				Measurement units
	Sum of training load (HZT Points)	Dynamic memory stores and displays last few workouts.				Display options
	% of maximum heart rate					Upload Data and Setting
						Ease of programming with display pointers or text
						Help Key
						Distance walk/run + heart rate
						Zoom which enlarges the data in the display.

*Cycling monitors may feature positioning (latitude and longitude), speed, altitude, thermometer, cadence, riding time, and power output. ** Lap time may include: best lap time/lap and split times; current, average and peak heart rate for each lap; cycling samples saved at the preset recording intervals (5, 30, 60 sec.); and other information at the end of each lap.



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Today, there are nearly 200 different models and over 20 manufacturers of heart rate monitors. Each monitor has different functions and feature set. Each monitor requires unique programming or "button pushing". At Heart Zones we call this "buttonology" which is the programming of the heart rate monitor interfaces. As you add more functions and features to the monitor, you add cost to the tool.

As with other electronic products, monitors are going through the "convergence technology" product cycle. For example, you can get a cell phone or a PDA that also has heart rate features and functionality.

There are two different kinds of downloadable monitors: manual and computer based. Computer-based downloading of workout data into a heart rate workout profile and summary information can be one of the most interesting features of a training monitor. This output data is invaluable in measuring fitness improvement and permanently recording your workout sessions. It allows you to save the stored data for post-exercise time interpretation and evaluation. It provides validation, quantification, summary data of time in zones and heart zones training points, a measurement of training load. Manual downloading requires that you enter the data manually into your log or a computer spreadsheet.

What is most important is that a heart rate monitor is not a pedometer that works on the wrist and that tells you how fast your heart is beating. Rather, it is several devices all packaged into a personal training tool. If you are using the monitor that meets your needs, wants, and budget, you will find no better aid and supporter than your personal training tool – your heart rate number. Get ready. You are about to experience a new way to train with the potential to change the way you workout – emotionally and physically.