

Heart Rate Training, 2nd Edition

Roy Benson & Declan Connolly

In the weights room, it is easy to quantify the work output. How much weight was lifted per muscle group or in a workout multiplied by the number of sets and reps. If that number increases over time, then progress has been made. But how does one quantify work output for cardiovascular sessions? Whether you perform HIIT for health, body composition and your sport, or if your sessions are primarily prolonged, lower intensity endurance based, you can use an *external* metric to measure output, such as power (on a bike) or speed (for running and swimming). The other way to monitor performance is with an *internal* metric, heart rate.

Once the maximal heart rate is known (which the book has very useful 'in the field tests' to establish this number), then training can be organized into various blocks to achieve different outcomes. *Heart Rate Training* is considered the authoritative book on the subject of using heart training monitoring to improve fitness and endurance sports performance. Benson has close to sixty years coaching experience and Connolly is a leading exercise scientist. The combination of coach-scientist allows the book to be equally detailed in both the science and physiology of heart rate monitoring and its prescription of long-term, periodized training programs for a number of sports (walking, running, cycling, swimming, triathlon, rowing, cross-country skiing and team sports).

The book is divided into three sections. Part one covers the foundations and the theory of using a heart rate monitor. Here the reader will learn about the components of physical fitness, gain an in depth understanding of heart rate, how to determine one's maximal heart rate and the factors that can impact heart rate during exercise. There is also a very practical section on 'getting the most out of your monitor'.

The second section outlines the physiology of training, energy systems during exercise, and the foundations of program design for sports using the aerobic and anaerobic systems or speed and power-based activities. The final section of the book covers in detail the training plans for basic, intermediate and advanced fitness levels in various sports. Daily workout ideas with duration and training zone based on percentages of maximal heart rate make these later chapters invaluable for coaches and athletes alike.

This is a welcome new addition to an already classic book (I bought and loved the original edition years ago and having been using a heart rate monitor since 1993). Highly recommended for trainers and fitness/sports enthusiasts.

Reviewed by Tony Boutagy

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