



Self-Assessment: Exercise Intensity and Talk Test

The Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale below can help you measure how hard you think you're working, from 0 (nothing at all, like sitting in a chair) to 10 (very vigorous exercise). The exertion goal that you should strive for while exercising is a level 3 to a level 5. This level of intensity will give you the benefits of the exercise without overdoing it.

If you say "I know this exercise is doing me good" without having to pause mid-sentence, then you are not working hard enough. If you have to pause mid-sentence to take one breath then you are working at the right level. If you can not finish or start the sentence, then you are working harder than necessary.

0	No effort	Can talk and sing normally	 Aim for this level of exertion 
1	Very light activity		
2	Light activity		
3	Light to moderate activity	Can carry on a conversation and sing with light breathing	
4	Moderate activity	Can carry on a conversation and sing with moderately heavy breathing	
5		Can carry on a conversation, heavy breathing, cannot sing	
6		Speaking is harder, can only speak a few sentences at a time.	
7	Vigorous activity	Very heavy breathing, can speak in short syllables only	
8			
9	Very vigorous activity, close to maximum effort	Gasping for breath, cannot hold a conversation	
10			

Borg, G. (1998). Borg's perceived exertion and pain scales. Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL.

Reed JL, Pipe AL. The talk test: a useful tool for prescribing and monitoring exercise intensity. Curr Opin Cardiol. 2014;29:475-480.