

Video 4 - Resting Heart Rate Measurement

'All information contained in these videos is taken from the ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 10th Edition'

Resting measurements should always be conducted early on in an assessment, prior to any strenuous fitness assessments take place. Prior to measuring resting heart rate it is essential that the client is allowed at least 5 minutes to sit and relax, ideally in a calm and relaxing environment.

Several techniques can be used to record heart rate, with two of the most common being pulse palpation and use of a heart rate monitor.

The pulse palpation technique involves 'feeling' the pulse by placing the second and third fingers (i.e. index finger and middle finger), usually over the radial artery, located near the thumb side of the wrist. The pulse is counted for 30 or 60 seconds. The 30s count is multiplied by 2 to determine the 1-minute resting heart rate in beats per minute.

Heart rate monitors generally consist of a chest strap and a recording unit (such as a watch or tablet). Chest strap sensors benefit from a little moisture being applied to them with a damp cloth prior to application. Once wetted, the chest strap should be placed just below the pectoralis major muscles of the chest, centrally, and in direct contact with the skin. The elastic band should then be fed around the back and connected such that it is sufficiently tight to not move, but not so tight that it indents the skin. When properly placed, the recording unit should display regularly updated heart rate readings.