

## **Rate of Perceived Exertion – RPE Scale**

While doing physical activity, we want you to rate your perception of exertion, in addition to monitoring your exercise heart rate. You will rate your perception of how hard you are working using the “Borg” Rate of Perceived Exertion – RPE Scale. There are a variety of methods for determining exercise intensity levels. Common methods include measuring your exercise heart rate, and rating your perception of how hard you feel you are working using the Borg - Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale.

Perceived exertion is how hard you feel your body is working. It is based on the physical sensations a person experiences during physical activity, including increased heart rate, increased respiration or breathing rate, increased sweating, and muscle fatigue.

Although this is a subjective measure, a person's exertion rating may provide a fairly good estimate of the actual heart rate during physical activity (Borg, 1998).

During activity, use the Borg Scale to assign numbers to how you feel (see instructions below). Self-monitoring how hard your body is working can help you adjust the intensity of the activity by speeding up or slowing down your movements.

Through experience of monitoring how your body feels, it will become easier to know when to adjust your intensity. For example, a walker who wants to engage in moderate-intensity activity would aim for a Borg Scale level of "moderate" (3). If he describes his muscle fatigue and breathing as "very light" (1 on the Borg Scale) he would want to increase his intensity. On the other hand, if he felt his exertion was "very hard" (7) on the Borg Scale) he would need to slow down his movements to achieve the Moderate (3) intensity range. The Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion is also the preferred method to assess intensity among those individuals who take medications that affect heart rate or pulse.

## **How to Use the Perceived Exertion Scale**

Review the Borg RPE Scale and select a number that corresponds to how hard you perceive yourself to be working. This feeling should reflect how heavy and strenuous the exercise feels to you, combining all sensations and feelings of physical stress, effort, and fatigue. Do not concern yourself with any one factor such as leg pain or shortness of breath, but try to focus on your total feeling of exertion.

Look at the rating scale below while you are engaging in an activity. The scale ranges from .0 to 10, where .0 means no exertion – “Nothing At All” and 10 means maximal exertion, “Very, Very Hard.” Choose the number from below that best describes your level of exertion. You will see that from the rating of “Hard” (5) up to “Very, Very Hard” (10) there are some numbers without corresponding descriptions. This is to provide you with a range you may rate yourself in between “Hard” up to “Very, Very Hard.”

Rating yourself using the Borg – RPE Scale will give you a good idea of the intensity level of your activity, and you can use this information to speed up or slow down your exercise to reach your desired range.

Try to determine your feeling of exertion as honestly as possible, without thinking about what the actual physical load is. Your own feeling of effort and exertion is important, not how it compares to others. Look at the RPE Chart, think about how you feel and then select a number. Have fun and enjoy working out using the Borg - RPE Scale to guide you along the way!

### ***Rate of Perceived Exertion – “RPE” Scale\****

.0	Nothing at All
.05	Very, Very Light
1	Very Light
2	Light
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat Hard
5	Hard
6	
7	Very Hard
8	
9	
10	Very, Very Hard

\*Borg Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) 1 – 10 Modified Scale