






## Polar sport zones

Polar sport zones spell a new level of effectiveness in heart rate-based training. Training is divided into five sport zones based on percentages of maximum heart rate. With sport zones, you can easily select and monitor training intensities and follow Polar's sport zones-based training programs.

Target zone	Intensity % of HR <sub>max</sub> , bpm	Example durations	Training benefit
<b>5</b> MAXIMUM 	90–100% 171–190 bpm	less than 5 minutes	<b>Benefits:</b> Maximal or near maximal effort for breathing and muscles. <b>Feels like:</b> Very exhausting for breathing and muscles <b>Recommended for:</b> Very experienced and fit runners. Short intervals only, usually in final preparation for short running events
<b>4</b> HARD 	80–90% 152–172 bpm	2–10 minutes	<b>Benefits:</b> Increased ability to sustain high speed endurance <b>Feels like:</b> Causes muscular fatigue and heavy breathing <b>Recommended for:</b> Experienced runners for all year round training in varying length. Becomes more important during pre competition season
<b>3</b> MODERATE 	70–80% 133–152 bpm	10–40 minutes	<b>Benefits:</b> Enhances general training pace, makes Moderate intensity efforts easier and improves efficiency <b>Feels like:</b> Steady controlled fast breathing <b>Recommended for:</b> Runners progressing towards events or looking for performance gains, particularly for half and full marathon training.
<b>2</b> LIGHT 	60–70% 114–133 bpm	40–80 minutes	<b>Benefits:</b> Improves general base fitness, improves recovery and boosts metabolism <b>Feels like:</b> Comfortable and easy, low muscle and cardiovascular load <b>Recommended for:</b> Everybody for long training sessions during base training periods and for recovery exercises during competition season
<b>1</b> VERY LIGHT 	50–60% 104–114 bpm	20–40 minutes	<b>Benefits:</b> Helps to warm up and cool down and assists recovery <b>Feels like:</b> Very easy, little strain <b>Recommended for:</b> For recovery and cool-down exercises throughout the training season

HR<sub>max</sub> = Maximum heart rate (220-age). Example: 30 years old, 220–30=190 bpm

Running intensity in **sport zone 1** is very low. The main training principle is that performance level improves during recovery, not during training. Sometimes, training has been so strenuous that you may not have recovered yet the next day, in which case, you can accelerate the recovery process with very light intensity training.

Endurance training occurs in **sport zone 2**, and features an easy aerobic run. Endurance training is an essential part of every runner's training program. In fact, endurance training is the base of any training. Making progress in endurance training requires persistence.

Aerobic power is enhanced in **sport zone 3**. Here, training intensity is higher than in sport zones 1 and 2 but is still mainly aerobic. Training in sport zone 3 can, for instance, consist of intervals followed by recovery. Running in this zone is especially effective for improving the efficiency of blood circulation in the heart and skeletal muscles.

To compete at your top potential, you will need to do some training in **sport zones 4 and 5**. In these zones, you run anaerobically in intervals of up to 10 minutes: the shorter the interval, the higher the intensity. Sufficient recovery between intervals is very important. Training in zones 4 and 5 is designed to bring the runner to peak performance.

When running in a certain sport zone, the idea is to utilize the entire zone. The mid-zone is a good target, but you don't need to keep your heart rate at that exact level all the time.

Heart rate will gradually adjust to training intensity. For instance, when graduating from sport zone 1 to sport zone 3, blood circulation and heart rate can adjust in 3-5 minutes.

The response time of heart rate to an exercise of certain intensity varies according to training, recovery, environmental and other factors. It is, therefore, important to pay attention to any signs of fatigue and to react accordingly.

Polar sport zones work best with your own maximum heart rate, aerobic and anaerobic thresholds. To determine your maximum heart rate, use the age formula (as a default in your running computer), predicted maximum heart rate (HRmax-p), or have the value measured in a laboratory. Use sport zones when you train for a specific running event or for specific benefits in each of your workouts.