

Section

**B** **INSIDE MONEY:**  
 Briefcase .....2B  
 Puzzle.....6B  
 Entertainment...7B

Online: [www.register-herald.com](http://www.register-herald.com)

# Walk the talk to better health

**M**aking time to exercise not only enables us to maintain a healthy weight, it also makes it possible to do the things we want and need to do as we age. If you don't move it, you will lose it.

Exercise has proved to be the medicine to improve and extend life. So how do you make the most of the time you commit to exercise? Take it to the limit.

While any kind of movement is good for the body, activity at a certain level of intensity for a sustained period is what's most beneficial.

But what level and length of time are right for you? To discover this, you need first to understand a few basics.

At rest, the heart beats at a certain rate to provide our body with oxygen and nutrients. To determine your resting heart

rate (HR) in beats per minute, count the number of beats at your wrist or neck in 15 seconds, then multiply by 4. Contrast this to a more intense heart rate.

**HEALTHY BOTTOM LINE**



**Mick Bates**

As the body works harder, its demands for oxygen and other nutrients in the blood increase. So, the harder you work, the faster your heart beats. In fact, the heart rate rises in almost a straight line from a resting level to a maximum level. You can estimate your maximum heart rate by taking the number 220, then subtracting your age. For example, a 40-year-old's maximum heart rate is approximately 180 beats per minute (bpm) while a 60-year-old's is 160 bpm.

Research indicates the greatest benefit from being active comes from exercising in the range of 60 to 80 percent of your maximum heart rate. A 40-year-old, for example, should exercise in the range of 108 to 144 bpm.

To determine a safe and effective exercise range for you, multiply your maximum heart rate by 0.6 and 0.8. (For the mathematically-challenged, there's a quick link on [www.bodyworkshfr.com](http://www.bodyworkshfr.com) to a calculator that will do it for you.) Work within this range depending on our your specific goals and experience with exercise.

To easily gauge the intensity of your workout, use the following scale that has proved to correlate closely to HR. And, it requires no math and no special skills!

If you have not been very active, your heart rate will rise quickly. As you get more fit, you have to work harder to produce the same increase in heart rate. Either way, the ideal levels are 6 to 8.

■ **Level 1** — I just woke up and haven't even hit the alarm button.

■ **Level 2** — I am comfortable and I could maintain this pace all day.

■ **Level 3** — I am still comfortable, but I am breathing a bit harder.

■ **Level 4** — I'm working a little bit and I have broken a sweat.

■ **Level 5** — I can still talk easily and sing.

■ **Level 6** — I can still talk but I can't sing.

See **HEALTH, 2B**

## HEALTH

Continued from 1B

■ **Level 7** — I can still talk, but I don't really want to.

■ **Level 8** — I can grunt a response to your questions and can only keep this pace up for a little while.

■ **Level 9** — I can't do this much longer.

■ **Level 10** — I am climbing Everest without oxygen.

If you are taking medications for blood pressure or for some other heart or vascular condition, these prescriptions may limit your heart rate increases.

You should check with a health care professional prior to starting an exercise program. (You can also download a Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire from our site.)

How hard has your body worked today, this week or month? How hard did you work your body the last time you exercised?

Bottom line? Use the "talk test" to determine if you are making the most of your time exercising. Let's get moving to create a healthier you, family, community and West Virginia.

— Bates owns and operates **BODYWORKS** in Beckley.



**BODYWORKS**[hfr.com](http://hfr.com)

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