

# Incorporating Heart Rate Training

## How Do I Get My Students to Wear HR Monitors?

by Janet Toussaint



You're a certified Spinning® Instructor. You've taken the workshops on heart rate training, educated yourself on the five Energy Zones™ information on heart rate training and can't wait to get it out to the students in your classes. But there's just one problem—most of them don't wear heart rate monitors! What do you do now?

Alone in your efforts to convince members to buy into heart rate training can be like fighting City Hall. You need club-wide support. It's all about communicating the information from top down; from general manager to fitness staff, to front desk, member services and pro shop staff. All departments must be part of this campaign. Most importantly, we, as Spinning coaches must practice what we preach. We can spread the word to fellow instructors about the benefits of heart rate training. Remember, we are the “front line” to

members. If we are all on the same page, the message comes across loud and clear. Here are some tips for getting started.

**Management :** First and most importantly, the club owner or general manager needs to understand the positive impact this could have on member retention. When members see results (which they will with heart rate training), they will be “happy customers” and less apt to drop out of their fitness routines. Additionally, the sale of monitors in the facility can be another source of income for the club. What owner/manager would not want to participate in a program that can increase the bottom line?

**Floor Staff:** Personal trainers can offer specialty “heart rate training” sessions. The client purchases a session that can include a monitor if the client does not have one. The trainer teaches them how to use the monitor, performs exercise testing and provides heart rate parameters for the client. The client can begin implementing heart rate training right away. Floor staff within the fitness department should encourage members using treadmills, stair climbers, elliptical trainers, rowers, etc. to utilize the heart monitor function on the various pieces of equipment. Try group treadmill classes geared to specific heart rate parameters—that's a guaranteed hit!

**Group Fitness:** Group fitness instructors should encourage the use of heart rate monitors in their classes, whether it's step, circuit training or weight training classes—think of the value the instructor can add to their class by cueing heart rate parameters into their classes! Now you have personal trainers, Spinning Instructors and group fitness instructors all talking the same talk, which will add to the success of the heart rate monitor program at the club.

**The Front Line:** Member services, sales, and front desk personnel are incredibly power-



ful in delivering information, as well...if they have it. Make sure they are up to speed on the benefits of heart rate training so they can communicate them to members and potential members, and answer any questions that come their way. A great way to conduct a product knowledge session for all club staff is to offer them a special heart rate monitor only Spinning® class. Knowledgeable staff means more interaction with members, which translates into an increase in member retention.

But there's more you can do. Think of yourself as an educator. We need to teach our students the importance of monitoring intensity and how it can so greatly affect the results of their efforts in training. We need to teach them that the simplest way to monitor their heart rate is the use of the monitor. There's no guessing, no math, no counting.

## **How you get information to your students is critical. Keep it simple!**

- For each class, teach your students why they are training at the level you have them at that day. For example, if you are teaching an Endurance ride, explain why it is important to know their maximum aerobic heart rate is 80%; why they don't want to go over their AT and reduce the results of their aerobic training. Keep the information simple and easy to understand, and put it in terms they're interested in (like fat burning!).
- Make the cueing of heart rate parameters simple. Sometimes the constant "technical" talk of heart rates deters members from buying into it. How about "65% - easy, comfortable" or "85% - challenging, difficult"? Be concise and articulate in your instruction.
- Create a class on the schedule indicating that monitors are mandatory. Market it as an incredible training event that will provide participants with an in-depth look at heart rate training. Each time the group meets, provide a handout on the purpose of that day's training. This will work if you make it an 8-12 week course in which people walk away with an in-depth understanding of heart rate training. They will become your voice, as well.
- I've found that clubs who have monitors on hand for members' use have a higher percentage of people using them in class. If the club purchases 10 or 15 monitors for members to borrow, and also purchases others to sell, it will make its money back on the loaners.

## **Below is a breakdown of the benefits of HR training, from a club standpoint:**

### **Club Benefits**

- Increased revenue
- Increases program participation
- Increased success rate for members

### **Member Benefits**

- Improves health/fitness level
- Training is more efficient
- Better balance to fitness regime
- Strengthens mind/body connection



- Member takes control of own intensity
- Less chance for injury
- Will not overtrain
- Increases metabolism
- Increased fat-burning efficiency

What it comes down to is this: Communicating the effectiveness of heart rate training does not start and end with the Spinning® Instructor. It is a philosophy of training that must be accepted internally in order for members to accept it. Build your campaign internally before you introduce it to the members. Present it as a club-wide campaign. If you continue “knocking on their door,” they will eventually “open” it!

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