

Feel the beat

Heart rate monitors help regulate your training. Here are eight of the best



HOW IT WORKS



Endurance coach **Marc Laithwaite** says: "In simple terms, your heart rate tells you how hard your body is working at any given time, so heart rate monitors registering beats per minute (BPM) can be a relatively inexpensive way to monitor your training intensity. To get the most from your running you should train at a wide range of intensities as each has specific benefits. Heart rate monitors often let you set training zones – pre-defined 'bands of intensity' – at which you can train so you don't have to rely on your judgement of 'perceived effort' to guide you. However, do be aware that your heart can be slow to respond to changes during speedwork, and when you are tired your heart rate can be slower than normal. In these instances you do need to use a little 'perceived effort' in addition to info from your monitor."



SUUNTO VECTOR HR £230

This outdoor specific watch with HR monitor has a barometer for sussing out the weather conditions and a digital compass with which you can follow bearings. The altimeter goes to 9000m and works with the HR monitor so you can measure your vertical speed and monitor the impact of altitude. You can also programme the HR monitor with zone alarms to let you know if you're training too hard or, indeed, too soft.

>>> 0844 372 1010; www.suunto.com



POLAR RS300X £115

This sleek watch with HR monitor helps you train at the right intensity with personalised heart rate zones. It tells you how many calories you've burned, it remembers 16 workouts, measures your fitness and monitors progress, and you have free access to Polar's online training. To get your speed and distance timings for more accurate readings, link it to the S1 foot pod (£80) or G1 GPS sensor (£122), available separately.

>>> (01926) 310 330; www.polarelectro.co.uk



TIMEX RACE TRAINER £150

Here's a watch and HR monitor that allow you to plan and follow serious training regimes. It has a 10 workout memory, logs your average heart rate for up to 50 laps and allows you to programme five interval timers with individual heart rate zones. You can use its wireless data exchanger to upload your workouts to your computer to track and analyse your training with a free Timex Trainer account via the website.

>>> (020) 8687 9620; www.timex.co.uk



GARMIN FORERUNNER 310XT £330

One for keen runners who swim and cycle too, this GPS-enabled watch and HR monitor is water-resistant to 50m. You can use heart rate zones to tailor your exertion levels, find out calories burnt, track speed and distance and race a Virtual Partner. Send the data wirelessly to your computer to analyse your work out and plan your next with advice from Garmin's online community or their Training Centre software.

>>> 0808 238 0000; www.garmin.co.uk



CARDIOSPORT C3 COMBI £70

If you like your analogue watches then check out this HR monitor. Old-style clock hands overlay the digital screen that shows your heart rate, calories and fat burned, Body Mass Index, stopwatch and training zone targets. It memorises one training session at a time and is water resistant to 30m.

>>> (023) 9225 7388; www.cardiosport.com



SOLEUS SURGE X £95

Store plenty of interval training sessions with this simple, easy to use watch and HR monitor from a new-to-the-UK brand. The water resistant Surge X has a large screen which can display 7 data sets, calculates your calories, stores 30 runs with a 100-lap memory, has three programmable training zones with an in-zone alarm and recovery timer.

>>> (020) 3239 4240; www.soleusrunning.co.uk



NIKE+ SPORT BAND £40 AND SENSOR KIT £20

This cool-looking watch does not have a HR monitor, but the Sensor Kit records your distance, pace, time and calories burned and saves a week's worth of workouts. Then connect the removable Nike+ SportBand Link to your computer and go to nikeplus.com to track and share your runs with Google maps, set goals and challenge up to 50 mates to see who can do the most miles in a week, or the fastest 5k.

>>> (020) 7949 0456; www.nikeplus.com



OREGON SCIENTIFIC STRAPLESS SE138 £40

This is a waterproof watch and HR monitor without the restriction of a chest strap. Although you won't get continuous heart rate information, you can get your beats per minute whenever you want by placing you fingers on the conductive plates. This helps to estimate your calories burned and monitor your fitness progress, but you won't get an average heart rate read out.

>>> (01978) 664743; www.fitnessmonitors.com