

How to measure your heart rate

Your heart rate, also known as your **pulse**, is the number of times your heart beats in a minute. It is measured in bpm (beats per minute). The pulse in your wrist is known as your **radial pulse**.

Did you know?



Your heart rate can slow down or speed up depending on what you're doing.



You will need:

- your wrist
- a stopwatch
- a pen and personal chart or spreadsheet.

What to do

Tip: Sit in a calm, quiet place for at least five minutes before checking your pulse. This will give you a more accurate resting heart rate.

- 1 Hold out one hand, turn your palm towards the ceiling, relax your fingers and bend your elbow slightly.
- 2 With your other hand, take your index and middle finger and place them on the soft area of your wrist below your thumb.
- 3 Gently press your fingers down until you can feel the beating of your radial pulse. You may need to move your fingers around or press down slightly harder until you can feel it.
- 4 Count the number of beats you can feel in 30 seconds.
- 5 Double the number of beats to give the number of beats in 60 seconds.
- 6 Record this number in beats per minute (bpm). This is known as your **resting heart rate**.

Does your heart rate change?

Carry out a Victorian drill, then take your heart rate again.

- How does exercise affect your heart rate?
- Which exercise caused the biggest increase in your heart rate?
- Why does your heart need to beat faster during exercise?