

Ratings of perceived exertion (RPE) – Scale ¹

The scale below is a subjective measure to assess your aerobic exercise intensity. The next page includes additional descriptions on intensity levels.

Perceived Exertion Ration	Description of Exertion
6	No exertion at all
7	Extremely light
8	
9	Very light
10	
11	Light
12	
13	Somewhat hard
14	
15	Hard
16	
17	Very hard
18	
19	Extremely hard
20	Maximal exertion

¹ G. Borg Borg's Perceived Exertion and Pain Scales Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL (1998)

Intensity levels: mild – moderate – vigorous

The table below provides additional descriptions of mild, moderate and vigorous intensity.

	Mild	Moderate	Vigorous
General	This includes physical activities that require very light work. You should feel like you're working a little bit, but overall, you shouldn't find yourself working too hard.	This includes physical activities that require some physical effort. You should feel like you're working somewhat hard but can keep going for a long time.	This includes physical activities that require a lot of physical effort. You should feel like you're working really hard (almost at their maximum) and can only do the activity for a short time before getting tired. These activities can be exhausting.
Breathing and heart rate	These stay normal or are only a little bit elevated than normal	Breathing is harder and heart rate is faster than normal, but not to the extreme.	Breathing is fairly hard, and both are much faster than normal.
Muscles	Muscles are loose, warmed-up and relaxed; they feel normal temperature or a little bit warmer and not tired at all.	Muscles feel pumped and worked. They're warmer than normal and start to get tired after awhile	Muscles burn, are tight and tense, feel a lot warmer than normal, and feel tired quickly.
Skin	Skin is normal temperature or only a little bit warmer, and not sweaty.	Skin is a little bit warmer than normal, and might be a little sweaty.	Skin is much warmer than normal and might be sweaty.
Mind	You might feel very alert, but there is no effect on concentration.	You require some concentration to complete.	You require a lot of concentration (almost full) to complete.

More information on subjective measures of aerobic intensity in adults with spinal cord injury can be find here:

van der Scheer JW, Hutchinson M, Paulson T, Martin Ginis KA, Goosey-Tolfrey VL. Reliability and Validity of Subjective Measures of Aerobic Intensity in Adults With Spinal Cord Injury: A Systematic Review. *PM&R* ,Volume 10 , Issue 2 , 194 – 207.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmrj.2017.08.440>