

ZIGZAGGING YOUR FAT-BURNING RANGE

Name: _____ Date: _____ Ambient heart rate: _____

When you exercise, your body burns a blend of fuels, primarily carbohydrate and fat. The ratio of this fuel depends on a number of factors, such as your body composition (lean mass and fat mass percentages), your current fitness level, the type and amount of foods you eat, the timing of your last meal, and the heart zone in which you are exercising. If you want your body to burn fat as the primary fuel, it is usually best to train within your fat-burning range.

The goal of fat loss is to expand your fat-burning range so that your body can metabolize more fat as the source of calories. In other words, the fitter you are, the more fat you burn. This is because fitter people have a larger fat-burning range, meaning that they have trained their bodies to be more efficient at using fat for fuel.

The best way to enlarge your fat-burning range is to increase your anaerobic threshold, moving it toward your MHR. The fat-burning range of fit people may be as large as 55 to 90 percent of MHR.

Instructions

1. Program your fat-burning range into your monitor (floor = 55 percent of your MHR; ceiling = your estimated anaerobic threshold from worksheet 5.6).

The floor of my fat-burning range is _____ bpm (55 percent of MHR).

The ceiling of my fat-burning range is _____ bpm (anaerobic threshold).

2. Warm up adequately with an activity of your choice.
3. Increase your intensity quickly until you hit the ceiling of your fat-burning range. (You increase intensity by going faster.)
4. Immediately decrease your intensity by slowing your rate of exertion until you reach the floor of your fat-burning range.
5. Continue this pattern of zigzagging (from floor to ceiling to floor to ceiling) your fat-burning range for 15 to 30 minutes.
6. Take several minutes for a complete recovery.
7. Count the number of times you hit the ceiling of your fat-burning range.

Questions

How can you increase your heart rate when you are exercising?

How can you speed up heart rate recovery?

What did you learn about hitting and surpassing the ceiling and floor of your fat-burning range?

How can you enlarge your fat-burning range?

What activities lead to shifting your energy equation?

Does increasing the number of zigzags mean that you are fitter? Why or why not?