

♥ HEART HEALTH

Tools For A Better Workout And A Healthier Heart

(NAPSA)—Sometimes, the best exercise equipment isn't what you find in the gym—it's what you bring there.

Experts say tucking a personal heart rate monitor or pedometer into your gym bag could be key to a better workout. The tiny devices are used to track workout intensity, helping people more efficiently burn calories and reach their exercise and weight loss goals.

"The monitors assure you're working out efficiently," explains Kate Powers, MS, a National Academy of Sports Medicine certified performance enhancement specialist and regional metabolic specialist for Life Time Fitness. "Too little intensity yields slow results and keeps you from achieving your goals. And an intensity that's consistently too high can be counterproductive."

To determine your target heart rate, you can have a metabolic test done at a gym or by a personal fitness instructor. You can also use the following formula from the American Heart Association (AHA) as a general guideline: "220 - your age = your *maximum* heart rate." Your target heart rate is between 55 and 90 percent of that number.

The AHA says adults need moderate-intensity aerobic exercise for 30 minutes, five times per week, or vigorous exercise for 20 minutes, three times per week. Powers offers these tips for using a heart rate monitor or pedometer to meet those goals:

- **Bring your own.** Don't rely on heart rate monitors that are built into machines at the gym. Some machines don't have this option, and having your own personal monitor eliminates the hassle of holding to the machine to measure your heart rate, which can give you delayed responses



Experts say a heart rate monitor can help people reach weight loss and heart health goals faster.

and impact your workout. Invest in your own device. They're relatively inexpensive, can be powered by simple Energizer® batteries and can be a great way to track your workout progress. Similarly, using your own pedometer can help you track not only the miles you cover at the gym but also throughout the day as you run errands or handle other tasks.

- **Do a calorie challenge.** Use the calorie-counting feature on your heart rate monitor and give yourself a daily goal. For example, burning 3,500 calories is equivalent to one pound of fat. You can set a goal to lose one pound per week, and you can use your monitor to help you keep track of calories burned, roughly 500 calories per day to achieve this goal.

- **Use interval training to burn more fat.** You can use your heart rate monitor to alert you of how intensely you are exercising. For example, if you think of your exertion in 5 levels—with level 1

being mild exertion and level 5 being extreme exertion—you should aim for a mix of intensity. A great way to do interval training is to spend two minutes exercising at a level 2 of exertion, one minute at level 4 of exertion, then back to level 2.

- **Don't assume that a harder workout is always better for you.** Mix your workout intensity during the week so you can burn fat and challenge your heart and lungs. Some days you'll want to keep your heart rate in a lower zone and some days in a higher zone to maximize calorie and fat burning and to improve your cardiovascular health.

- **Don't think that heart rate monitors are just for hard-core athletes.** Everyone, even beginners, can benefit from using a heart rate monitor to keep track of his or her fitness and health goals.

For more information and tips, visit www.energizer.com/livehealthy and www.americanheart.org.