

The Ultra Journey - Intensity zones



Zone	Effort	RPE (rate of perceived exertion)	% of LTHR (lactate threshold heart rate)	% of maximum heart rate	Zone information and descriptors
1	Active recovery	10–12 Easy	<84%	<72%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery Easy jogging Start of warm-up pace Easy jogging pace between intervals
2	Aerobic	12–14 Steady	85–91%	73–79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aerobic training All-day running pace Concentration required to maintain effort Controlled calm efficiency Breathing more regular than at Zone 1: often 4 steps to inhale and 3 steps to exhale Fatigue sensation is low; however, after this zone has been held for many hours it can become hard due to the accumulating fatigue Running pace often used on the 'easy' part of a Fartlek run set
3	Tempo	14–16 Moderate hard	92–95%	80–86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deeper breathing than at Zone 2 Slightly higher sense of leg fatigue than Zone 2 Comfortably solid Conversation is start-stop in nature Close to marathon pace (flat/road)
4	Sub-threshold	16–18 Hard	96–99% (LTHR)	87–92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This hurts Lactate threshold training Conversation difficult to hold (almost impossible due to depth and frequency of breathing) Continuous sense of leg fatigue and concentration required to maintain effort The top marker of this zone is your threshold heart rate (your average heart rate for a 1-hour all-out effort) Approx. Half marathon to 10km pace (flat/road) depending on runner's pace
5a	Above threshold (super threshold)	18 Very hard	100–102%	93–95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This really hurts. The effort starts hard and progresses to uncomfortable very quickly. Conversation not possible VO2 Max training 3km–5km pace (flat/road) depending on runner's pace
5b	Aerobic capacity	19	103–106%	96–98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversation not possible VO2 Max training
5c	Anaerobic capacity	20	107–110+%	99–100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very short, high-intensity effort Sprints

Both % of threshold heart rate and maximum heart rate have been provided, as some people have a preference for one over the other. It is my belief that threshold heart rate is a superior form of measurement, as understanding your intensity level in relation to this key marker is more beneficial to the athlete than understanding intensity relative to maximum heart rate. The reason for this is because it is your output at threshold that is a key determining factor of your success compared to what your maximum heart rate is.

*LTHR Zones courtesy of Joe Friel, creator of Training Peaks

<https://www.trainingpeaks.com/blog/joe-friel-s-quick-guide-to-setting-zones/>