
18. Zone 2 Exercises & The Talk Test

Zone 2 training is performed at a moderate, sustainable effort that allows you to carry on a conversation, although singing would be difficult. The activity itself does not define Zone 2—your effort does. Any exercise listed below counts as Zone 2 only when you can perform it continuously or with minimal interruption while remaining at the talk-test effort. The right pace will vary by person, activity, terrain, and day.

Choose one or more activities and use the Talk Test to adjust your pace, resistance, incline, or range of motion. Begin with an amount you can repeat comfortably and gradually build toward longer or more frequent sessions. A common goal is about 30 minutes, 3 to 5 times a week, but shorter sessions also count. Zone 2 supports aerobic endurance and metabolic flexibility, but it does not replace resistance exercise or everyday movement. Brief higher-intensity exercise may be added separately, if appropriate.

Choose One or More Activities

- ☐ Brisk walking at a steady pace
- ☐ Bodyweight circuits low-intensity, steady-state movements (marching in place, arm circles, bodyweight squats)
- ☐ Cable marches
- ☐ Cross-country skiing, steady pace
- ☐ Cycling stationary or outdoor steady resistance or flat terrain
- ☐ Dancing low to moderate intensity
- ☐ Elliptical training
- ☐ Hill walking slight incline
- ☐ Inline skating
- ☐ Kayaking moderate paddle pace
- ☐ Paddle boarding
- ☐ Pilates continuous low/ moderate intensity
- ☐ Resistance band walks
- ☐ Rucking, walking with a light weighted backpack/vest
- ☐ Stair climbing
- ☐ Yoga continuous flow low/ moderate intensity

Add your Zone 2 exercise choice to Worksheet 19. Mixed Exercise Weekly Routine Tracker (Appendix A).

Add your Zone 2 exercise choice to Worksheet 22. Mito Single Strategy Tracker - First 30 Days (Appendix A).

THE TALK TEST FOR ZONE 2

One of the simplest ways to find a sustainable Zone 2 effort is the talk test. After you have been moving steadily for several minutes, say a familiar sentence of about 10 to 15 words.

At the right pace, your breathing is deeper than at rest, but you can still speak the whole sentence comfortably and carry on a conversation. Singing would be difficult.

If talking feels almost effortless and you could sing, you may be below the intended range; gently increase the pace or resistance if that is appropriate for you. If you can manage only a few words before pausing for breath, slow down.

The goal is a repeatable effort that feels moderate, controlled, and sustainable.

A Note About Heart-Rate Formulas

The familiar “220 minus your age” formula is only a rough estimate and can become less useful when medications, a pacemaker, or certain heart conditions affect how your heart rate responds to exercise.

For many older adults, the Talk Test and perceived effort are more practical guides to Zone 2 than trying to reach a calculated heart-rate number. If you have a pacemaker, heart condition or other medical concerns, or take medication that affects heart rate, ask your healthcare professional whether a specific exercise heart-rate range is appropriate for you.

From: **The Power to Age Well: An Action Guide to Mitochondria & Healthy Longevity**

A full-sized, printable copy of this resource is available at:

IntelligentLivingForever.com/Worksheets. Look for the title of this worksheet.
