

Elist Discussion on In-Water Heart Rate Monitors

On July 8th, Sue noted:

The May 2012 issue of Prevention magazine has an article "Make a Splash" by Jenna Bergen (p. 66). In that article is information on the Polar FT4 water resistant watch that lets you time yourself in the pool while tracking your heart rate and caloric burn. It is posted as available for approximately \$100 from www.polarusa.com

I have not used this device. However, for some time researchers and practitioners alike have been looking for a way to monitor heart rate while wet.

Carrick replied:

I used it for Pauline Ivins' week-long 2011 Aqua Retreat. The cost of the monitor was 40\$ (40 English pounds.). It worked and survived on this burly Hulkster, [aka Incredible Hulk, a heavily be-muscled comic book character] in varying conditions indoors and outside. Definitely make sure to read the instructions right after opening the box.

Pauline Responded:

I have been using the POLAR Heart Rate Monitors in my water exercise seminars for years. They are waterproof and an excellent tool to have in your training kit. I am constantly surprised that many aquatic instructors are unaware of this product. It has been around for years and makes heart rate monitoring so easy and accurate. A monitor is also a very motivating piece of equipment! POLAR has regional representatives to help you with orders, and they run club programs to help clubs acquire heart rate (HR) monitors at discount pricing. They provide many support services, video tutorials, etc.

I can help with questions if anyone is interested. waterpolly@gmail.com

On 7-9 Linda commented:

We used the Heart Rate Monitors when we ran our 'Aqua Mommas' class to make sure our pregnant ladies were staying within their targeted heart range.

Mary wrote:

I agree with all the positive comments about HR monitors. We use the Polar ones with the military, and also when we put MDs (doctors) in the pool so they can better understand how we train. One caution - too many monitors, too close together and patients can read off the person's monitor next to them. I use them at the initial session and at intervals thereafter to record changes.

Sara asked:

I'm wondering if anyone has noticed the issues that Polar USA itself notes on the product page on the web?

http://www.polarusa.com/us-en/support/Polar_Products_in_Water_Environment?product_id=22999&category=faqs

“When measuring heart rate in water, you may experience interference for the following

reasons: Pool water with high chlorine content, and seawater are very conductive. The electrodes of the transmitter may short-circuit, preventing ECG signals from being detected by the transmitter.

“Jumping into water or strenuous muscle movement during competitive swimming may shift the transmitter to a location on the body where ECG signals cannot be picked up. The ECG signal strength is individual and may vary depending on the individual’s tissue composition. Problems occur more frequently when measuring heart rate in water.”

July 10th, Pauline wrote

Hi Sara,

Yes, I would agree with POLAR's list of issues, but these are very rare. The chest strap can certainly slip during some vigorous exercise, so it is important to get the strap fitted well before use. POLAR does still have a sports bra with the transmitter strap built into the bra. I have also found that women's breasts can be in the way when locating the heart and placing the chest strap accurately. Because of this a couple of rare cases, we ended up placing the strap above the breasts to find the heart signal!

I travel all over the country and I have used heart rate monitors in numerous pools with no problems.

On 7-10 Terri wrote:

I have women in my classes who use heart rate monitors. They retrieve: calories burned, heart rate range, how long they were in their “zone”, and total time of exercise. It’s great feedback for water aerobics.

Julia wrote:

I have never seen them used at my pool so this is interesting to hear!

Ken Wrote:

I used a simple heart rate monitor years ago. I bought it from a bike shop. I think it was a Polar. It had a wristwatch display and a black chest strap to hold the sensor in place. It would beep with each heartbeat if my heart rate was above or below the desired range but made no sound when within the range. People in the pool would ask me "What is that?"

I would reply, "It's my Wonder Bra! People ‘wonder’ why I wear it." I always got a good laugh.

I'm glad to hear that there are more sophisticated ones available now. I plan to check the Polar website & perhaps order one.

Maybe someday there will be affordable, waterproof EKG monitors available with a data recorder so you could have a Cardiologist evaluate it for you.