

RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION

A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR STRENGTH TRAINING AFTER 50



RPE helps you choose the right challenge on any day.
It's how hard the exercise feels, not a test of willpower.

RPE LEVEL	HOW IT FEELS	TALK TEST	REPS IN RESERVE (RIR)	WHAT IT MEANS
1	Very, very easy Minimal effort	Easy to talk	10+	Warm-up, mobility, recovery work
2	Very easy Light effort	Easy to talk	8–10	Build movement, technique, blood flow
3	Easy Comfortable effort	Can talk easily	6–8	Endurance, general conditioning
4	Moderate Starting to feel it	Can talk with ease	4–6	Aerobic base, general fitness
5	Somewhat hard Noticeable effort	Can talk, but more effort	3–4	Steady training zone
6	Hard Challenging but sustainable	Can speak in short sentences	2–3	Strength endurance, longer sets
7	Very hard Hard to keep going	Can speak in few words	1–2	Hypertrophy, working sets
8	Very, very hard Difficult to continue	Can only say a few words	0–1	High intensity, near your limit
9	Extremely hard Almost maximal effort	Hard to speak	0	Use with caution, very demanding
10	Max effort Absolute all-out	Cannot speak	0	Maximal effort, not for everyday use

HOW TO USE RPE IN YOUR STRENGTH TRAINING



1. CHOOSE YOUR TARGET

Most strength training sets for adults over 50 sit around **RPE 6–8**.



2. MATCH THE DAY

Good day? Train closer to **RPE 7–8**.
Tired or stressed? Stay around **RPE 5–6**.



3. LEAVE REPS IN RESERVE

Aim to finish sets with **1–3** good reps still in the tank.
That's smart training.



4. PROGRESS GRADUALLY

Improve over time by adding reps, a little more weight, or slightly higher RPE — **not all at once**.



REMEMBER

- RPE is personal. Use your own body as the guide.
- Focus on good technique and control.
- Quality > Quantity.



TRAIN SMART. TRAIN CONSISTENT. STAY STRONG.

The goal isn't to do the most...
It's to keep getting stronger for life.