

Time Trial Field Test: Running

The following field test was developed by Jorge Martinez, a USAT-certified triathlon coach, professional triathlete and race director of the Dash & Bash triathlon in Devens, MA. If you have any questions about specifics of the test, or would like to obtain personalized coaching services he can be contacted at jorge@3way-racing.com.

A very simple but highly effective approach to calculate your heart rate training zones for running is by performing a 30-minute time trial field test. This can be accomplished either on a track, treadmill or a somewhat flat running loop/trail. If the test is done on a treadmill, be sure to have enough fluids as the heat will affect you more. Also, for this test it is imperative that you to wear a heart rate monitor with a lap feature so you can store the information for the entire test.

Test protocol:

After a 15 minute warm-up of easy running, finish with 3-5 20 second bursts of speed (though not all out), then 20 seconds of easy walking to recover. This is designed to get your heart rate going.

Time trial test:

1. Begin running and start recording your heart rate. The goal is to run as fast as possible, but at a pace that will allow you to complete the entire 30 minute test.
2. Ten minutes into the test, hit the 'Lap' button on your heart rate monitor so that you can record your average heart rate over the final 20 minutes of the test.
3. Continue running hard for the next 20 minutes—it is very important that you finish knowing you gave it everything you had.
4. After the test, run/jog/walk easy for 15 minutes to cool down.

Your average heart rate over the final 20 minutes of the test is your Lactate Threshold. Use this number in conjunction with the Training Zones Calculator to calculate each of your training zones.