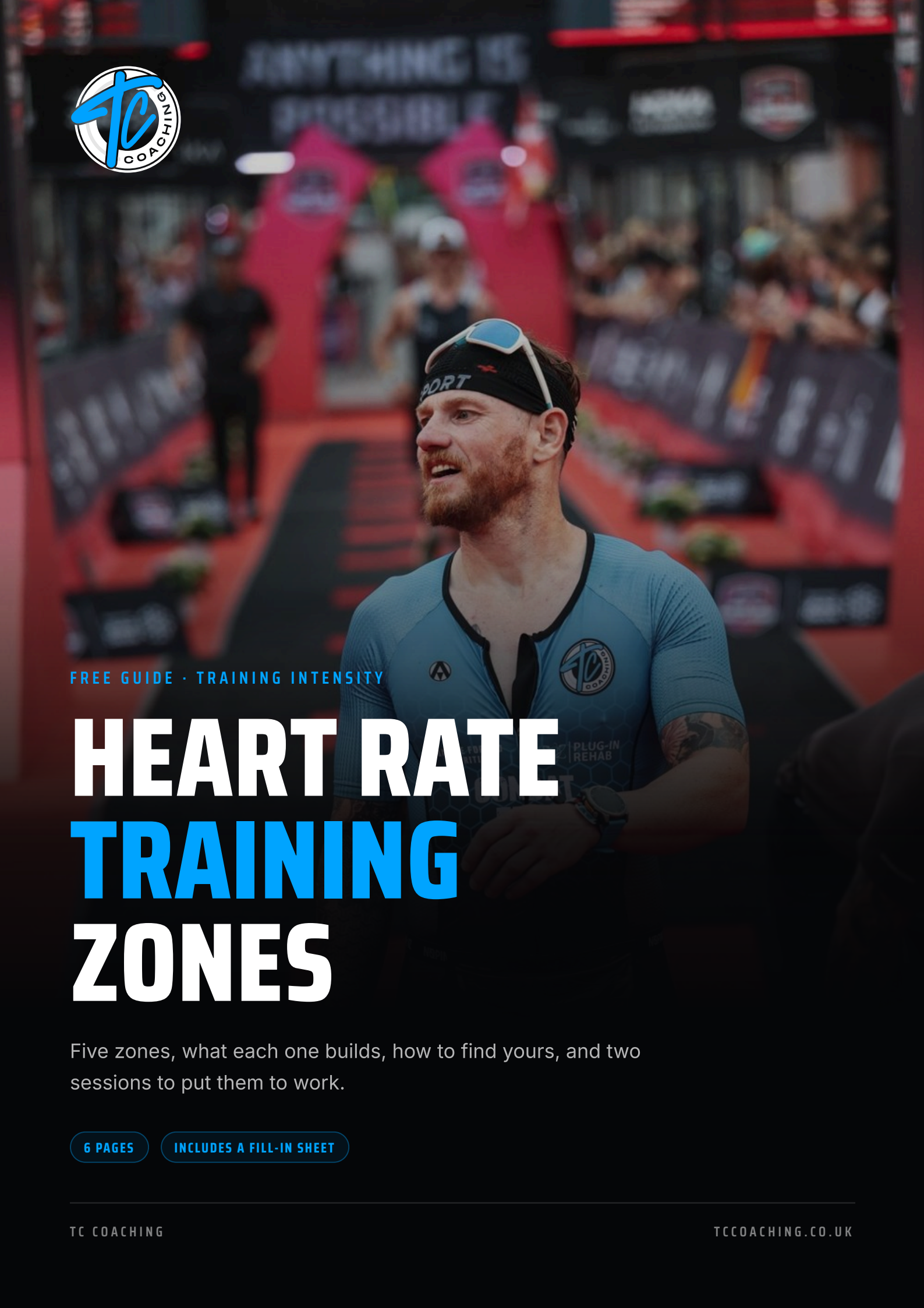


FREE GUIDE · TRAINING INTENSITY

HEART RATE TRAINING ZONES

Five zones, what each one builds, how to find yours, and two sessions to put them to work.

6 PAGES

INCLUDES A FILL-IN SHEET

THE SHORT VERSION

FIVE ZONES, FIVE JOBS

Heart rate zones split your effort into five bands, each set as a percentage of your maximum heart rate. Each band trains something different, so knowing which one you are in tells you what a session is actually doing.

Low zones build the engine: endurance, recovery and the ability to keep going. High zones build the top end: speed, power and the ability to hurt for longer. Most people sit in the middle by accident and get a bit of both and not much of either. Zones stop that.

ZONE	% OF MAX HR	WHAT IT BUILDS
ZONE 1	68–73%	Recovery and warm-ups. Light enough to help you bounce back from hard days.
ZONE 2	73–80%	Your aerobic base. More mitochondria, better use of fat as fuel, a bigger engine.
ZONE 3	80–87%	Aerobic fitness under a bit more pressure. Steady, honest work.
ZONE 4	87–93%	Threshold. Raises the pace you can hold before you tie up.
ZONE 5	93–100%	VO2 max and top-end speed. Short, hard, and only with full recovery between.

Finding your max. The quick estimate is 220 minus your age. It is a starting point, not a measurement: for any one person it can be ten beats or more out either way. A race or a hard hill effort with a chest strap gets you closer. Every watch and app calculates zones slightly differently, so pick one method and stick with it.

FILL THIS IN

MY ZONES

Write your max heart rate in the top row, then work out each zone as a percentage of it. Or let our free calculator do it for you at tccoaching.co.uk/tools/heart-rate-zones.

ZONE	% OF MAX HR	MY RANGE (BPM)
MAX HR	100%	----------
● ZONE 1	68–73%	---------- to ----------
● ZONE 2	73–80%	---------- to ----------
● ZONE 3	80–87%	---------- to ----------
● ZONE 4	87–93%	---------- to ----------
● ZONE 5	93–100%	---------- to ----------

WORKED EXAMPLE

A 40-year-old: 220 − 40 = **180 bpm** max. Zone 2 is 73–80% of 180, so **131 to 144 bpm**. That is the range for most of their weekly running.

Re-check every few months. If a race or a hard test shows a higher max than you wrote down, update the sheet. And remember heart rate lags effort by a minute or two: on short reps, go by feel.

ZONES 2 AND 3

BUILD THE AEROBIC BASE

A strong aerobic base decides more race results than anything else. It is the gearbox that lets you hold a hard effort for longer, and recover faster between efforts.

Easy, steady work grows the small blood vessels around your muscles, adds mitochondria and teaches your body to burn more fat at a given pace, which saves carbohydrate for when the race gets hard. Once built, it fades slowly, unlike top-end speed and strength.

The catch is that it is boring. Nobody looks at sixty minutes of Zone 2 on the bike and thinks it looks exciting. Do it anyway: it is what makes the exciting sessions possible, and in Hyrox it is what lets you run well between the stations.

3–4×
A WEEK
Sessions in Zone 2 to 3.

40–60
MINUTES EACH
Long enough to matter, short enough to recover from.

4–8
WEEKS
Until most people feel the difference in endurance and recovery.

The common mistake. Letting easy runs creep into Zone 3 and 4 because Zone 2 feels too slow. If you have to walk the hills to stay in zone, walk the hills. It gets quicker.



ZONES 4 AND 5

RAISE THE TOP END

Short, hard intervals build the speed and power that easy miles cannot: a higher VO2 max, better tolerance of hard efforts, and more drive from fast-twitch muscle.

One or two sessions a week is plenty alongside your base work. More than that and the hard days start to cost your easy days. Warm up and cool down every time with 10 to 15 minutes of light jogging and some dynamic drills.

PURPOSE	SESSION
VO2 MAX & ANAEROBIC CAPACITY	**2 min in Zone 4**, challenging but controlled. Jog or walk 1 min. **2 min in Zone 5**, very hard, close to your limit. Jog or walk 2 min. Repeat the pair **4 to 5 times**.
TOP-END SPEED	**30 s sprint**, the fastest pace you can hold for the whole 30 seconds. Jog or walk 1 min. Repeat **8 to 10 times**.

Scale it to you. Start at the bottom of each rep range. Add a rep only when the last one was as good as the first. On a 30-second sprint your heart rate will not reach Zone 5 before it ends; go by effort.

HOW IT FITS A WEEK

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Zone 2 40 min	Intervals	Rest or mobility	Zone 2 45 min	Rest	Zone 2 60 min	Zone 3 steady

An example only. Mostly green, a little orange, red once. Build your own week with our free week planner.

THE ONLY PLACE SUCCESS COMES BEFORE WORK IS IN THE DICTIONARY.

VINCE LOMBARDI

WANT IT BUILT AROUND YOU?

I'm Tom, Head Coach at TC Coaching. Zones are where every plan we write starts. In **Project Legacy™** a team builds your training around your diary, your data and your goal: training from me, nutrition from Adam Glover, rehab from Gaz McNamara.

APPLY FOR COACHING

FREE TOOLS