BORG RPE 9

Quick Provider Guide for Exercise & Therapeutic Activity

Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (6-20 Scale)
Use this guide to help a patient recognize and describe an **RPE of 9: Very Light effort.**

WHAT RPE 9 SHOULD FEEL LIKE

RPE 9 = VERY LIGHT

The patient is exercising, but the activity should still feel easy and comfortable. There may be a mild increase in breathing or heart rate, but the effort should feel highly sustainable.

PATIENT-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

“This should feel quite easy. You are exercising, but you should feel like you could keep going for a long time.”
“You should notice that you are moving and working a little, but it should not feel difficult.”
“Think of this as easy exercise—not rest, but not hard work either.”

TALK TEST

At RPE 9: Conversation should generally feel effortless. The patient should usually be able to speak comfortably without feeling that talking is interrupted by the exercise effort.

IF THE PATIENT IS UNSURE, ASK:

- Does this feel easy?
- Could you keep going at this pace for a long time?
- Does your breathing still feel comfortable?
- Do you feel like you are working only a little?
- Can you talk comfortably while doing this?
- Does this feel sustainable?

QUICK CUE

RPE 9 = “I’m exercising, but it still feels easy.”
Easy • Comfortable • Light effort • Highly sustainable

PROVIDER REMINDER: RPE is subjective. Encourage the patient to report their own perception of overall effort rather than choosing the number they think the provider expects.

Use RPE alongside appropriate clinical monitoring and individualize exercise intensity according to the patient's condition, symptoms, precautions, medications, and plan of care.