

Heart monitor of gold

POLAR ONCE AGAIN SHOWS IT HAS ITS FINGER ON THE PULSE WITH THE NEW RCX5

WITH TECHNOLOGY moving on at a pace, Polar has launched its new RCX5 training computer. Renowned as the market leader in heart-rate monitoring, Polar has designed the RCX5 for runners who want to optimise their training with the latest performance enhancing technology. With cutting edge heart-rate functions, a maximised display, strong aluminium frame, easy-to-use buttons, compact GPS unit and a waterproof disturbance-free WearLink+ Hybrid transmitter, it is the ultimate accessory to take the guesswork out of training sessions.

Many similar products come with complicated manuals that still leave you fiddling cluelessly with buttons mid-run. But our tester, who had worn many monitors over the years, said: "I didn't even look at the booklet initially and had it working within 10 minutes. Of course, any wearer must familiarise themselves with the functions to get the best out of it, and once they do, the limits are boundless."

All you have to do is wear a chest strap for the heart monitor and the tiny GPS unit on an arm strap or in a pocket and off you go!

Some of the features include: zone optimiser – adjust personal heart-rate zones for every training session based on your current condition so you can take into account factors such as fatigue, recovery, hydration and general well-being and train safely within the set zones for each run; race pace – allows the wearer to set a pre-determined target time for a set distance, which then shows how far ahead or behind you are of the pace/speed required to meet the target; G5 GPS – a compact unit with 20 hours' battery life and which can be charged



Take heart: with Polar

through a USB port; the WearLink+ Hybrid transmitter – gives heart-rate data – even in water; motivational running index – based on heart-rate and speed data measured during a run, gives daily information about performance levels, aerobic fitness and running economy; sport Profiles – supports multisport activity by providing sport specific data between sports during training at the touch of a button (run, cycle, swim).

In the training files there are different screens to flick through, with the first showing the start time, duration (total time) and distance run. On the next screen is average heart rate (beats per minute plus the percentage of your maximum) along with maximum and minimum values. The third screen shows calories used and fat burned (percentage of calories). Flicking to the fourth screen gives you the all-important pace you've been running at and this is shown as average pace and maximum pace.

The following screens give you your running index, which indicates if you've been running in the correct zone, while the next screen maps out different zones (1-5) and what pace you have been running in each of them and for how long (athletes tend to spend more time in zones 3 and 4). All of the data can be measured in imperial or metric.

The monitor also stores weekly summaries and total running, which shows duration, distance, calories, sessions and how much time has been spent in each zone. Of course, there is no need to flick through these screens while out running – all of the information is at hand when the run has finished.

By downloading the summaries of your runs to your computer, you can see every aspect in full-colour graphics via the on-line training diary (polarpersonaltrainer.com). For example, the activities for a week are shown with distance covered, time and what type of work-out has been done along with the zones. Another graphic shows heart rate and training load, while there is also a bar chart for planned and actual training loads. An excellent graphic, which can be used for training or a race, shows the athlete every detail of their run, including a graphic of the route. And one of the best features is a Google Earth graphic which shows the actual route of the run with heart rates.

The RCX5 retails at £359.50 with GPS. It can also be purchased with different packages: with s3+ stride sensor (£329.50), bike with CS speed sensor W.I.N.D. (£297.50) and as a standard wrist monitor and chest belt (available September).

The final word comes from our tester, who lamented: "I thought when I first started wearing it that it was a bit of a luxury. But now I have to send it back to the manufacturers I am going to miss it big-time! It actually made my runs more enjoyable and I'll feel lost without it!"

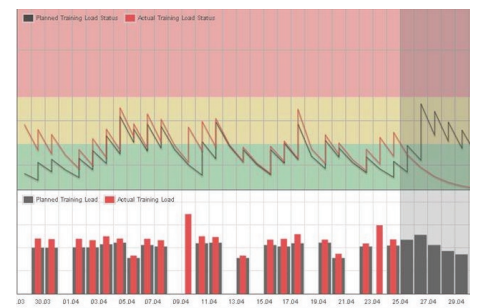
» www.polaruk.co.uk



The Polar RCX5 plots a variety of personal statistics



A Google Earth graphic shows the run with heart rates



No need to check the watch on the run as it's all online