

THE NEW & NOTEWORTHY

Baseline Intel | An Overlooked Sign of Stress

While most wearable device users track their heart rate, few pay attention to heart rate variability (HRV), a simple but powerful signal of how well your body is regulating itself. Unlike resting heart rate, HRV reflects how adaptable your nervous system is under changing conditions. The best part? HRV is trainable, and September is a smart time to start. Earlier sunsets, renewed structure, and cooler mornings create ideal conditions for nervous system recalibration.

BEHIND THE NUMBER:

Heart rate variability measures the small changes in time between each heartbeat, controlled by your autonomic nervous system. It's not about how fast your heart beats, but how flexible it is in response to internal and external demands. A higher HRV means your body can switch smoothly between states of rest and activity, signaling strong recovery and regulation. A lower number may indicate stress, inflammation, or recovery strain, often before symptoms appear. Low variability shows up before most people feel run down, often predicting illness, burnout, or cognitive fatigue.

THE IMPACT:

Higher HRV scores are associated with better recovery, more stable mood, improved metabolic function, and greater cognitive adaptability. Over time, building HRV may support long-term resilience and reduce disease risk.

YOUR ACTION PLAN:

- Use 2–3 weeks of readings to identify your personal baseline
- Watch for sustained dips of 10–20ms as early warning signs
- Scale back workouts, simplify stressors, and increase rest during low periods
- Strengthen regulation with slow nasal breathing, hydration, morning light, and steady meals
- Try HRV-tracking tools like Elite HRV, WHOOP, or HRV4Biofeedback

DIVE DEEPER: Read the full [Washington Post](#) article for a breakdown of what HRV really tells you and how to use it to your wellness advantage this coming season and beyond.