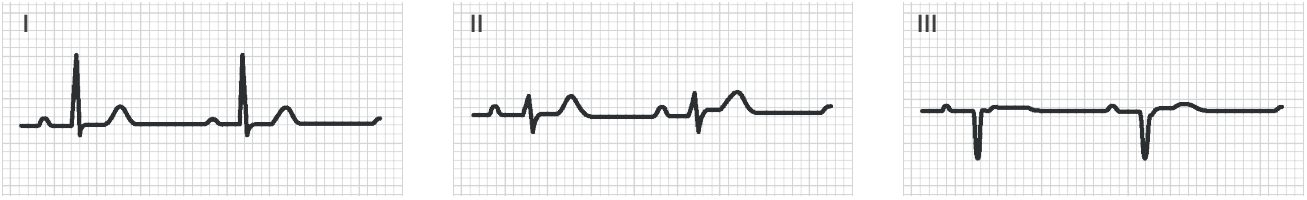
Recording stress ECGs—pearls and pitfalls

OBTAINING A BASELINE

The following resting ECGs should be run before an exercise stress test.

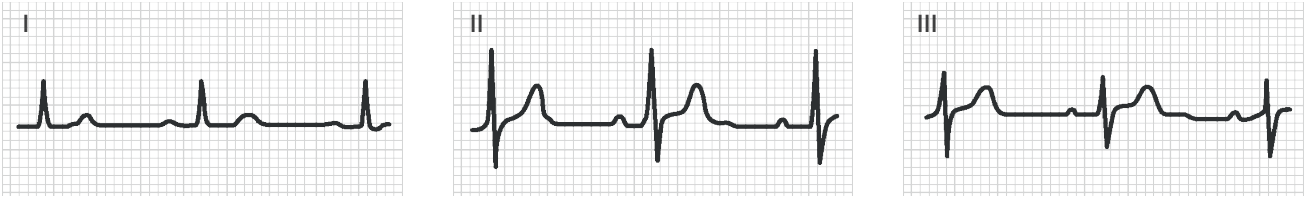
Resting supine

This is the "standard" resting ECG and is an important baseline against which you can compare previous and future resting ECGs. Arm and leg electrodes are placed on the arms and legs as would normally be done for a resting ECG.



Supine ECG with "modified" electrode placement

This is also known as "exercise placement" or "Mason-Likar". Right arm, left arm, right leg, and left leg electrodes are all moved to the torso. Sometimes this changes the ECG, sometimes it does not. The only way to know if the lead placement alone changes the ECG is to run this ECG.



Standing ECG with "modified" electrode placement

Sometimes just standing up changes the ECG. We can only determine this if we run a standing ECG. The standing ECG will also serve as the baseline for changes during exercise because the patient will be upright during the exercise stress test.

And of course take a minute to analyze the resting cardiogram and make sure there are no contraindications to proceeding with the test.