

MOVE YOUR WAY

Assessing Your Fitness Level



WHAT'S YOUR TRUE FITNESS LEVEL?



You likely have an idea of how fit you are, but knowing some specifics can help you set realistic fitness goals, monitor your progress, and maintain your motivation. Generally, fitness is assessed in four key areas: aerobic fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. There are different ways to assess each, but here are a few simple tests to try. Be sure to record your results so you can use them as benchmarks against which to measure your progress.

Aerobic Fitness: Running or Jogging Test

Grab a stopwatch and assess your aerobic fitness by timing yourself on a 1.5-mile (2.4-kilometer) run or jog. The following times indicate a good fitness level based on age and gender. A lower time generally indicates better aerobic fitness, while a higher time suggests a need for improvement.



Women: Time in Minutes	Age	Men: Time in Minutes
13	25	11
13.5	35	11.5
14	45	12
16	55	13
17.5	65	14

Muscular Strength and Endurance: Push-up Test

If you're just starting a fitness program, do modified push-ups on your knees. However, if you're generally fit and able to do them, go for classic push-ups. Keep your back straight when doing push-ups. Extend your arms fully when you're up and lower your body until your chin touches the floor when you're down. Do as many push-ups as you can until you need to stop to rest. The numbers below outline a good fitness level based on age and gender. Counts above these targets indicate better fitness. If your number is lower, you have a goal to work towards!



Women: Number of Push-ups	Age	Men: Number of Push-ups
20	25	28
19	35	21
14	45	16
10	55	12
10	65	10

Flexibility: Sit-and-Reach Test

The sit-and-reach test is a simple way to assess the flexibility of the back of your legs, your hips, and your lower back. Place a yardstick or measuring tape on the floor and secure it with tape across the 15-inch mark. In a seated position, place the soles of your feet in line with the 15-inch mark. Slowly reach forward as far as you can, holding the position for at least 1 second. Note the distance you reached. Repeat the test two more times and record the best distance of the three reaches. The following measurements indicate good flexibility based on age and gender.



Women: Farthest Reach	Age	Men: Farthest Reach
21.5 in. (55 cm)	25	19.5 in. (50 cm)
20.5 in. (52 cm)	35	18.5 in. (47 cm)
20 in. (51 cm)	45	17.5 in. (44 cm)
19 in. (48 cm)	55	16.5 in. (42 cm)
17.5 inches (44 cm)	65	15.5 inches (39 cm)

Body Composition: Waist Circumference

With a measuring tape, measure your waist circumference just above the hipbones. If your waist circumference is greater than your hips, you have an increased risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. The risk is even greater with a waist circumference of 35 inches or more for women and 40 inches or more for men.



IMPROVE YOUR RESULTS

The results of your fitness assessment can be used to set goals for staying active and making improvements to your scores. Below are some activities you can do to develop your fitness in the various areas. It's important to keep track of your progress, so take measurements six weeks after you begin a fitness program and periodically afterward. Be sure to celebrate your progress each time you repeat your assessment!

Aerobic Activity

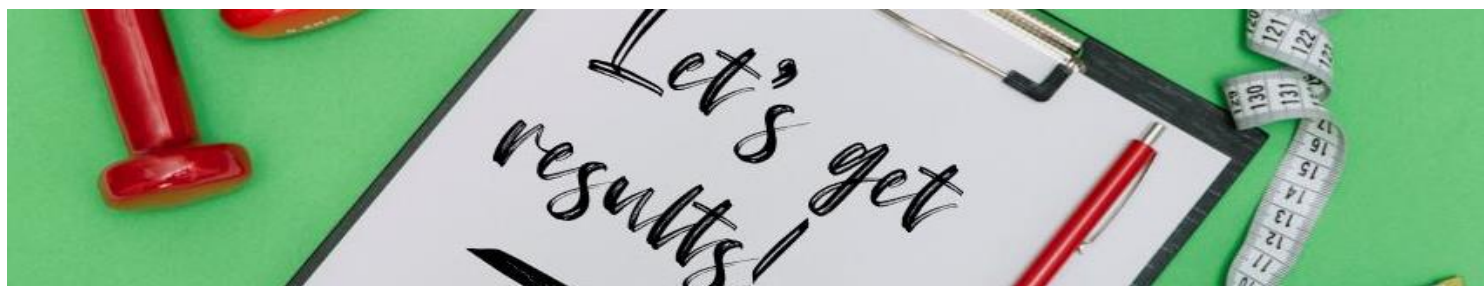
- Walking fast
- Water aerobics
- Biking
- Running
- Swimming laps
- Playing tennis or soccer
- Pushing a lawnmower

Muscle-Strengthening Activity

- Lifting weights
- Working with resistance bands
- Body-weight exercises
- Climbing stairs
- Walking hills
- Push-ups, sit-ups, and squats
- Heavy gardening or yard work

Flexibility Activity

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tai chi
- Working with stretch bands
- Static stretches
- Dynamic stretches



Sources www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20046433 | Images from Freepik.com