



How fit are you? See how you measure up.

Adapted from www.mayoclinic.com

Four key areas of fitness are aerobic fitness, muscular fitness, flexibility and body composition. Estimate each of these and get an overall picture of your fitness.

Supplies and tools for the test:

- A pedometer or a walking route where one mile distance is known
- A watch that can measure seconds or a stopwatch
- A yardstick
- Heavy-duty tape
- Someone to help you with the flexibility test
- A scale to measure your body weight
- A cloth, plastic or paper measuring tape to measure your waist
- The Fitness Log on the following page, or some other way to keep a record.

1. Check your aerobic fitness: Brisk one-mile walk

Take a brisk one-mile (1.6-kilometer) walk. Record how long it takes you to walk the mile, and your pulse (heart rate) before and after the walk. To check your pulse over your carotid artery, place your index and middle fingers on your neck to the side of your windpipe. To check your pulse at your wrist, place two fingers between the bone and the tendon over your radial artery — which is located on the thumb side of your wrist. When you feel your pulse, look at your watch and count the number of beats in 10 seconds. Multiply this number by 6 to get your heart rate per minute. For example, if you count 15 beats in 10 seconds, multiply 15 by 6 for a total of 90 beats per minute.

2. Measure muscular fitness: Push-ups

If you're just starting a fitness program, do modified push-ups on your knees. If you're already fit, do classic push-ups. For both types:

- Lie face down on the floor with your elbows bent, palms next to your shoulders.
- Keeping your back straight, push up with your arms until your arms are extended.
- Lower your body until your chest touches the floor.
- Push your body upward, returning to the starting position.

Count each time you return to the starting position as one push-up. Do as many push-ups as you can until you need to stop for rest.

3. Assess your flexibility: Sit-and-reach test

To estimate the flexibility of the backs of your legs, your hips and your lower back:

- Place a yardstick on the floor. Secure it by placing a piece of tape across the yardstick at the 15-inch (38-centimeter) mark.
- Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you. Sit so that the soles of your feet are even with the mark on the yardstick and one end of the yardstick is between your legs.
- Ask a helper to place his or her hands on top of your knees to anchor them.
- Reach forward as far as you can, holding the position for two seconds.

