

Assess yourself

How Physically Fit Are You?

1 Evaluating Your Muscular Strength and Endurance (Partial Curl-Up Test)

Your abdominal muscles are important for core stability and back support; this test will assess their muscular endurance.

Procedure

Lie on a mat with your arms by your sides, palms flat on the mat, elbows straight, and fingers extended. Bend your knees at a 90-degree angle. Your instructor or partner will mark your starting finger position with a piece of masking tape aligned with the tip of each middle finger. He or she will also mark with tape your ending position, 10 cm or 3 in. away from the first piece of tape—one ending position tape for each hand.

Set a metronome to 50 beats per minute and curl up at this slow, controlled pace: one curl-up every two beats (25 curl-ups per min). Curl your head and upper back upward, lifting your shoulder blades off the mat (your trunk should make a 30-degree angle with the mat) and reaching your arms forward along the mat to touch the ending tape. Then curl back down so that your upper back and shoulders touch the floor. During the entire curl-up, your fingers, feet, and buttocks should stay on the mat. Your partner will count the number of correct repetitions you complete. Perform as many curl-ups as you can in 1 minute without pausing, to a maximum of 25.



Healthy Musculoskeletal Fitness: Norms and Health Benefit Zones: Curl-Ups

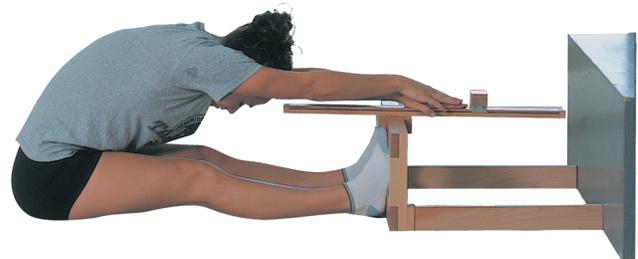
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
Men					
Ages 20–29	25	21–24	16–20	11–15	≤ 10
Ages 30–39	25	18–24	15–17	11–14	≤ 10
Ages 40–49	25	18–24	13–17	6–12	≤ 5
Ages 50–59	25	17–24	11–16	8–10	≤ 7
Ages 60–69	25	16–24	11–15	6–10	≤ 5
Women					
Ages 20–29	25	18–24	14–17	5–13	≤ 4
Ages 30–39	25	19–24	10–18	6–9	≤ 5
Ages 40–49	25	19–24	11–18	4–10	≤ 3
Ages 50–59	25	19–24	10–18	6–9	≤ 5
Ages 60–69	25	17–24	8–16	3–7	≤ 2

Source: From *Canadian Physical Activity, Fitness & Lifestyle Approach: CSEP-Health & Fitness Program's Appraisal and Counselling Strategy*, 3rd edition, © 2003. Reprinted with permission from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology.



2 Evaluating Your Flexibility (the Sit-and-Reach Test)

This test measures the general flexibility of your lower back, hips, and hamstring muscles.



Procedure

Warm up with some light activity that involves the total body and range-of-motion exercises and stretches for the lower back and hamstrings. For the test, start by sitting upright, straight-legged on a mat with your shoes removed and soles of the feet flat against the flexometer (sit-and-reach box) at the 26-cm mark. Inner edges of the soles are placed within 2 cm of the measuring scale.

Have a partner on hand to record your measurements. Stretch your arms out in front of you and, keeping the hands parallel to each other, slowly reach forward with both hands as far as possible, holding the position for approximately 2 seconds. Your fingertips should be in contact with the measuring portion (meter stick) of the sit-and-reach box. To facilitate a longer reach, exhale and drop your head between your arms while reaching forward. Keep your knees extended the whole time and breathe normally.

Your score is the most distant point (in centimeters) reached with the fingertips; have your partner make note of this number for you. Perform the test twice, record your best score, and compare it with the norms presented in the tables on the next page.

Healthy Musculoskeletal Fitness: Norms and Health Benefit Zones: Sit-and-Reach Test*

Men	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement	Women	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
Ages 20–29	≥ 40 cm	34–39 cm	30–33 cm	25–29 cm	≤ 24 cm	Ages 20–29	≥ 41 cm	37–40 cm	33–36 cm	28–32 cm	≤ 27 cm
Ages 30–39	≥ 38 cm	33–37 cm	28–32 cm	23–27 cm	≤ 22 cm	Ages 30–39	≥ 41 cm	36–40 cm	32–35 cm	27–31 cm	≤ 26 cm
Ages 40–49	≥ 35 cm	29–34 cm	24–28 cm	18–23 cm	≤ 17 cm	Ages 40–49	≥ 38 cm	34–37 cm	30–33 cm	25–29 cm	≤ 24 cm
Ages 50–59	≥ 35 cm	28–34 cm	24–27 cm	16–23 cm	≤ 15 cm	Ages 50–59	≥ 39 cm	33–38 cm	30–32 cm	25–29 cm	≤ 24 cm
Ages 60–69	≥ 33 cm	25–32 cm	20–24 cm	15–19 cm	≤ 14 cm	Ages 60–69	≥ 35 cm	31–34 cm	27–30 cm	23–26 cm	≤ 22 cm

*Note: These norms are based on a sit-and-reach box in which the zero point is set at 26 cm. When using a box in which the zero point is set at 23 cm, subtract 3 cm from each value in this table.

Source: From *Canadian Physical Activity, Fitness & Lifestyle Approach: CSEP-Health & Fitness Program's Appraisal and Counselling Strategy*, 3rd edition, © 2003. Reprinted with permission from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology.

3 Evaluating Your Cardiorespiratory Endurance (the 1.5-Mile Run Test)

This test assesses your cardiorespiratory endurance level.

Procedure

Find a local track, typically one-quarter mile per lap, to perform your test. Run 1.5 miles; use a stopwatch to measure how long it takes to reach that distance. If you become extremely fatigued during the test, slow your pace or walk—do not overstress yourself! If you feel faint or nauseated or experience

any unusual pains in your upper body, stop and notify your instructor. Use the chart below to estimate your cardiorespiratory fitness level based on your age and sex. Note that women have lower standards for each fitness category, because they have higher levels of essential fat than men do.

Fitness Categories for 1.5-Mile Run Test

Men	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Women	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
20–29 yrs	< 10:10	10:10–11:29	11:30–12:38	> 12:38	20–29 yrs	< 11:59	11:59–13:24	13:25–14:50	> 14:50
30–39 yrs	< 10:47	10:47–11:54	11:55–12:58	> 12:58	30–39 yrs	< 12:25	12:25–14:08	14:09–15:43	> 15:43
40–49 yrs	< 11:16	11:16–12:24	12:25–13:50	> 13:50	40–49 yrs	< 13:24	13:24–14:53	14:54–16:31	> 16:31
50–59 yrs	< 12:09	12:09–13:35	13:36–15:06	> 15:06	50–59 yrs	< 14:35	14:35–16:35	16:36–18:18	> 18:18
60–69 yrs	< 13:24	13:24–15:04	15:05–16:46	> 16:46	60–69 yrs	< 16:34	16:34–18:27	18:28–20:16	> 20:16

Source: Reprinted with permission from The Cooper Institute®, Dallas, Texas, from a book called *Physical Fitness Assessments and Norms for Adults and Law Enforcement*. Available online at www.cooperinstitute.org.

YOUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

The **Assessyourself** activity helped you determine your current level of physical fitness. Based on your results, you may decide that you should take steps to improve one or more components of your physical fitness.

Today, you can:

- Visit your campus fitness facility and familiarize yourself with the equipment and resources. Find out what classes they offer, and take home a copy of the schedule.
- Walk between your classes; make an extra effort to take the long way to get from building to building. Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Take a stretch break. Spend 5 to 10 minutes in between homework projects or

just before bed doing some whole-body stretches to release tension.

Within the next 2 weeks, you can:

- Shop for comfortable workout clothes and appropriate footwear.
- Look into group activities that you might enjoy on your campus or in your community.
- Ask a friend to join you in your workout once a week. Agree on a date and time in advance so you both will be committed to following through.

- Plan for a physically active outing with a friend or date; perhaps you can go dancing or bowling or shoot hoops. Use active transportation (i.e., walk or cycle) to get to a movie or go out for dinner.

By the end of the semester, you can:

- Establish a regular routine (3 to 5 days per week) of physical activity or exercise. Mark your exercise times on your calendar and keep a log to track your progress.
- Take your workouts to the next level. If you have been working out at home, try going to a gym or participating in an exercise class. If you are walking, perhaps try intermittent jogging or sign up for a fitness event such as a charity 5K.