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## Fitness Assessment Results

The results are classified in to excellent, good, poor, etc and each of the tests/exercises are based on the average scores of healthy adults. These tests should provide you with a **guideline figure** of your current fitness levels and what areas you need to work on. Make sure you don't get too hung up about where you fall in the good, excellent or poor stakes, though. Perform the test every few weeks and see your improvements!!

Below are Target Fitness's top do it yourself ways of assessing your current fitness levels – which cover the following aspects of your fitness:

Note that a different set of results will sometimes also be given for **each sex**.

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# AEROBIC FITNESS

The higher your fitness levels the lower your RHR will be. Counting the number of beats of your resting heart rate (RHR) is a useful way of indicating your fitness progress. Here's how to work out your daily RHR.

## How to guide...

Your resting heart rate (RHR) represents the **number of times your heart beats each minute** when you are at rest. Since a strong cardiovascular system allows your heart to pump more blood with every beat, a lower RHR tends to correspond with **higher aerobic fitness** (for example, cyclist Lance Armstrong's RHR was allegedly only 32 beats per minute at the peak of his fitness).

To measure your RHR, place **two fingers on your wrist (NEVER your thumb!)**, below the thumb, to locate the radial pulse, and then count the number of beats you feel in 60 seconds. You should count the first beat as 'zero'. Do this first thing in the morning before you get up or eat/drink anything or do any exercise.

## Results of this exercise test:

- . 60 or less = good
- . 61 to 80 = average
- . 81 to 100 = high, but still considered acceptable
- . 101 or more = abnormally high (not good!)

*Your resting heart rate is a useful marker of your fitness progress, as it will drop as you get fitter!!!!*

# NECK FLEXIBILITY

Testing the flexibility of your neck will tell you how much more stretching and mobilising exercise you need to do to fully protect it from feeling tight. Helping you combat stress, headaches, migraines, and neck stiffness. Here's how to work out the flexibility of your neck.

## How to guide...

The neck is the most mobile part of the spine – or at least it should be! Often the neck gets tight on one side due to favoring that side in your general posture, when using the phone, carrying a bag and so on.

## How to do this exercise

To test your neck flexibility, sit up tall and look straight ahead. Get someone to stand directly behind you as you rotate your head to the right. Ask them to note how much of your **profile** they can see - Eyelashes of the left eye? Nose in full profile? Now slowly return to the centre and **rotate your head to the left**. Again, get your observer to assess how much of your profile they can see.

## Results of this exercise test:

If you find you have a greater range of motion in one direction than the other, then you should **incorporate stretches and mobilising exercises** into your fitness routine to extend your flexibility. Ask a member of staff for some advice on stretches!

# MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

Both Press-ups & Squats are a great indicator of your upper and lower body strength and the progress of your muscle building exercise. Technically, this test measures muscular endurance rather than pure strength, as it is based on how many you can do in a fixed period of time rather than how much weight you can lift – but it is still a respectable **measure of upper/lower-body brawn**. Press-ups challenge the **chest, shoulder and upper arm muscles** while squats work the entire leg – and require good core stability.

## How to guide...

*Time yourself for a minute.*

Assume a press-up position (if you can't do any full press-ups, then assume a modified position with your knees and lower legs on the floor). Each **repetition** must be executed with good technique: the body should remain in a straight line, the head should be in line with the spine, and the arms should **bend to at least 90 degrees**. Perform as many press ups as you can in the time limit!

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Keeping good technique - keep your back straight and weight through your heels. Lower yourself as if sitting down to perform the squat. When your thighs are parallel to the floor return to the starting position and repeat. Perform as many squats as you can in the time limit!

## Results of this exercise test:

Press ups		
Gender	Male	Female
Excellent	> 30	> 25
Good	25 - 29	20 - 24
Not bad	20 – 24	15 - 19
Very Poor, need work!!	< 19	< 14

Squats		
Gender	Male	Female
Excellent	> 34	>29
Good	33-34	27-29
Above average	30-32	24-26
Average	27-29	21-23
Below Average	24-26	18-20
Poor	21-23	15-17
Very Poor	< 21	<15

# CARDIOVASCULAR FITNESS

This is an excellent and widely practiced test that Kenneth Cooper – the man credited for inventing ‘aerobics’ – developed. Its called the ‘**Cooper Test**’. The test is mainly designed for running exercise – but you can walk it if necessary.

The important things are to maintain a steady pace, rather than go hell for leather for three minutes and then crawl for the remaining nine. Cooper’s results are based on a mixed gender sample of thousands of people.

## How to guide...

Use a flat, measurable route (an athletics track is ideal) or a treadmill. After a **five-minute warm-up**, set a stopwatch and run or walk at as fast a pace as you can sustain for the duration of the test. Record the **distance** and compare it to the values below.

## Results of this exercise test:

1.46 miles or more = **Excellent**

1.33 to 1.45 miles = **Good**

1.32 to 1.26 miles = **Fair**

1.25 miles or less = **Poor**

# CORE STABILITY

You've almost certainly heard of core stability (the strength and function of the deep stabilising muscles of the trunk) – but have you got any? 'The plank' will give you the answer, as it is a position that you will find difficult to hold if your core stability is poor. Simply practicing this exercise movement will soon get your core stabilisers firing.

## How to guide...

Lie on your stomach with your **forearms on the floor**, elbows directly under your shoulders, fists facing each other. Tighten your core muscles, curl your toes under, then press down through your forearms and extend your legs to lift your body. Your head, neck, back and legs should form a straight line (**like a plank of wood**). Look at the floor. Hold for as long as possible.

## Results of this exercise test:

If you can hold the position (but not your breath!) for **more than one minute**, then you are strong to the core. A time of 30 to 60 seconds is average, while less than 30 seconds means that you need to work on it more.

# SHOULDER MOBILITY

Hours working at a computer, surfing the net, watching TV, driving or simply sitting with poor posture can cause the shoulders to tighten up and the joints to lose mobility. The loop-the-loop exercise test therefore assesses your shoulder mobility in all directions.

## How to guide...

Sit or stand with your right arm straight up, and then **bend your forearm** from the elbow and reach your hand down to between your shoulder blades. Then take the left arm behind you, palm outwards, and attempt to make the hands meet.

## Results of this exercise

If you can link the fingers, then you're doing exceptionally well. If they touch, you've got no problems. If the fingertips are less than two inches apart, you could do with a bit of **extra mobility**, and if the gap is more than two inches, you definitely need to do some more shoulder work! If the test is easier to do on one side than the other, it means that there is an **imbalance** between the right and left sides that needs to be addressed, too.

# RUNNING PATTERN

Words like pronation and motion control are bandied around freely in running and fitness circles, but short of forking out for a full-scale gait analysis, how do you know what type of foot and foot strike pattern you have? This test will give you a basic picture of your running gait. Have a read of our How to guide...

## How to guide...

You need some plain concrete, a bath mat or even a **sheet of cardboard** to walk on. Dunk your feet in water and then walk across the surface of the concrete or cardboard. Can you see the entire **silhouette** of your foot, or is it more of an outline, with just heels and toes showing?

## Results of this exercise test:

- Toe prints plus heel but little in between = High arches. These are associated with **excessive supination, or under-pronation**.
- Entire foot shows = Low or flat arches. These are associated with over-pronation.
- Toes and forefoot plus heel, joined by a broad band = Normal or '**neutral**' foot strike.



# EXPLOSSIVE POWER

Power is the ability to exert a force quickly. It's what gets sprinters off the blocks, bodybuilders to lift weights and basket ballers shooting hoops. To exert power, all your muscle fibres have to be recruited, so people with lots of endurance, but less strength, are often quite poor at it. Here's our guide to working out your power explosiveness.

## How to guide...

To assess your power, stand next to a clear wall space and **raise your arm which is closest to the wall** as high as possible (without standing on your tip-toes!). Mark the spot where your fingertips touch the wall. Once you've done this, leap up as high as possible, arms overhead, and touch the highest point you can on the wall. If there isn't anyone there to mark the spot you reach, you can **smudge some chalk** or pencil on your finger to make a mark. Now you need to subtract your **standing height from your jumping height in cm** and compare your result to those below.

## Results of this exercise test:

Vertical Jump		
Gender	Male	Female
Excellent	61 – 70 cm	51 – 60 cm
Good	51 – 60 cm	41 – 50 cm
Average	41 – 50 cm	31 – 40 cm
Below average	< 40 cm	< 30 cm

# BODY FAT DISTRIBUTION

Waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) is an assessment of the proportion of fat stored around the waist compared to the hip girth. Having an apple shape (carrying excess fat around the stomach) is worse for your health than having a pear shape (carrying excess baggage around your hips or thighs), as it is associated with heart disease and diabetes.

Sugar (**especially refined sugar**) is a KEY cause of this, if you have either of these body shapes attempt to reduce your sugar intake and eat natural sugars from fruit and honey!!

## How to do guide

Measure the circumference of your hips at the **widest part** of your buttocks with the tape held firm but not pulling. Measure the circumference of your waist at the narrowest point. To determine the ratio, **divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement.**

## Results of this exercise test:

For **WOMEN**, a healthy waist-to-hip ratio is **less than 0.8**.  
For **MEN** a healthy waist-to-hip ratio is **less than 0.9**.

# MUSCLE STRENGTH

This exercise test – in which you sit on an ‘invisible chair’ against a wall until your thighs tighten – gives a good idea of your lower-body strength. Here's the [realbuzz.com](http://realbuzz.com) guide on how to do this exercise routine and see how strong your lower body is.

## How to guide...

Find a wall space, lean your back against it and shuffle your feet forward. Slide your back down the wall until your knee and hip joints are at a **right angle**, and then start your stopwatch. **Hold the position** as long as you can bear – breathing freely.

## Results of this exercise test:

	Muscle strength	
Gender	Male	Female
Excellent	> 76 seconds	> 46 seconds
Average	58 – 75 seconds	36 – 45 seconds
Below average	57 – 30 seconds	35 – 20 seconds
Poor	< 30 seconds	< 20 seconds

# BALANCE

**This is called the Stork test. Having a lack of balance plays a significant role in contributing to falls in later life - and balance deteriorates with age unless challenged. This is not only a great and challenging test but it also works as a great exercise to improve your balance!**

## How to guide...

Remove the shoes and place the hands on the hips, then position the non-supporting foot against the inside knee of the supporting leg. Give yourself one minute to practice the balance. When you are ready raises the heel to balance on the ball of your foot. The stopwatch is started as the heel is raised from the floor. The stopwatch is stopped if any of the follow occur:

- the hand(s) come off the hips
- the supporting foot swivels or moves (hops) in any direction
- the non-supporting foot loses contact with the knee.
- the heel of the supporting foot touches the floor.

## Results of this exercise test:

<b>Balance</b>	
Excellent	> 50 seconds
Good	40 – 50 seconds
Average	25 – 39 seconds
Fair	10 – 24 seconds
Poor	< 10 seconds