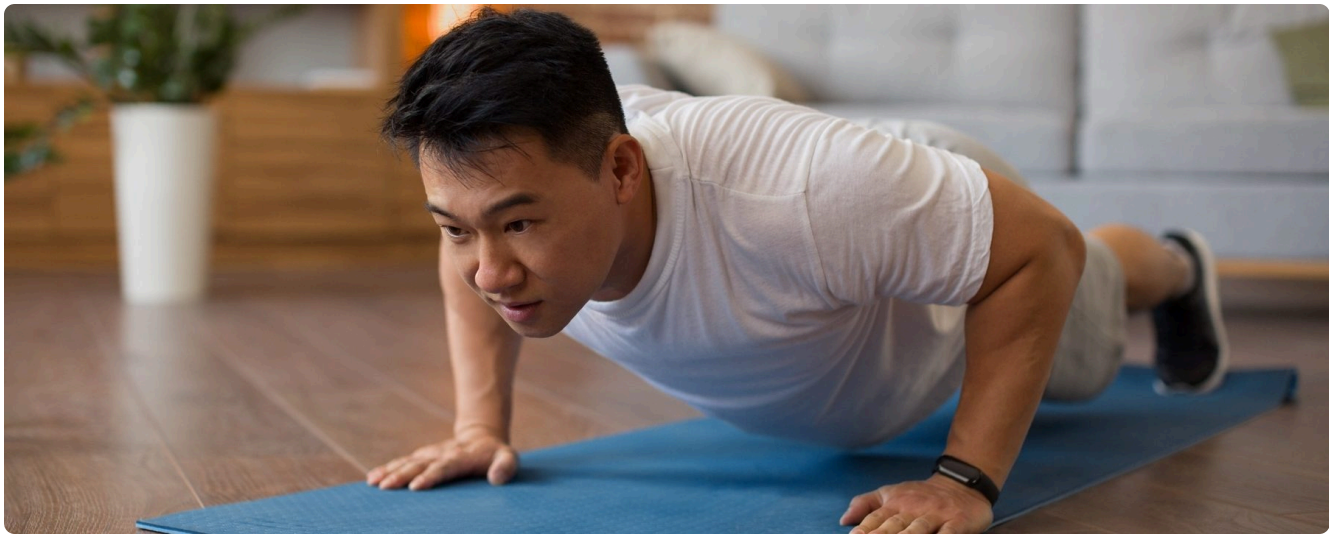
# Test your own fitness

*Last reviewed: October 17, 2026*



**A few simple tests give you a starting point and show progress that the mirror and scale can miss. Pick three or four, do them the same way every time, and retest every 6 to 8 weeks.**

**Why it matters:** A coach would test you before writing a plan. These tests let you do the same at home or in the gym, with no special equipment.

## Before you test

- **Check your health first.** Use the safety self-check, and talk to your doctor if it says to.
- **Warm up** for 5 to 10 minutes before every test.
- **Test when rested,** not the day after a hard workout.
- **Write it all down:** date, time of day, results and anything unusual (poor sleep, a cold).
- **Compare with yourself,** not with charts. Your own improvement is the number that matters.

## Cardio fitness: pick one

**Rockport 1-mile walk** (good for beginners and older adults)

1. Walk 1 mile on a flat track or treadmill as fast as you can without jogging.
2. Note your time in minutes (convert seconds: 30 seconds = 0.5 minute).
3. Take your heart rate right at the finish, in beats per minute.
4. Estimate your VO2 max (mL/kg/min):

132.853 − (0.0769 × weight in lb) − (0.3877 × age) + (6.315 if male, 0 if female) − (3.2649 × time in minutes) − (0.1565 × heart rate)

**Example:** a 50-year-old woman weighing 160 lb who walks the mile in 15.5 minutes with a heart rate of 140 scores about 132.853 − 12.30 − 19.39 − 50.61 − 21.91 = **28.6**.

**Cooper 12-minute run** (for people who already run)

1. Run or run-walk as far as you can in 12 minutes on a measured track.
2. Record the distance in miles.
3. Estimate your VO2 max (the most oxygen your body can use, a common measure of cardio fitness): (miles × 1,609 − 504.9) ÷ 44.73.

**Example:** 1.5 miles = 2,414 meters, so (2,414 − 504.9) ÷ 44.73 = **42.7**.

Both are estimates. Use them to track change over time.

## Strength and muscular endurance

### Push-ups

- Do as many as you can with good form: body straight, chest to a fist's height from the floor, arms fully straight at the top.
- Use your knees or an incline (hands on a bench) if needed, and test the same way each time.
- Stop when your form breaks.

### Pull-ups or inverted rows

- Pull-ups: hang with straight arms, pull until your chin clears the bar. Count full reps.
- Can't do one yet? Do inverted rows under a bar or sturdy table, feet on the floor, body straight. Count reps to form failure.

### Wall sit

- Back flat on a wall, thighs parallel to the floor. Time how long you can hold it.

## Power

### Vertical jump (wall reach)

1. Stand side-on to a wall and reach as high as you can. Mark the spot (chalk on your fingertips helps).
2. From a standing start, jump and touch the wall as high as you can.
3. The difference in inches is your jump. Take the best of three.

### Standing broad jump

1. Stand with toes behind a line.
2. Swing your arms and jump forward as far as you can, landing on both feet.
3. Measure from the line to the back of your nearest heel. Best of three.

## Mobility

**Knee-to-wall ankle test**

1. Kneel half-way, front foot facing a wall.
2. Push your knee forward to touch the wall without lifting your heel.
3. Move the foot back until you can just touch. Measure from big toe to wall.
4. Test both sides. Many people reach about 4 inches or more; a big difference between sides is worth working on.

## Core endurance

Time each hold until form breaks. Rest a few minutes between tests.

- **Side plank (each side):** on your elbow and feet, body straight. Compare the two sides; they should be close.
- **Back extensor hold:** lie face down on a bench with your upper body off the end, partner holding your legs. Hold your body level.
- **Trunk flexor hold:** sit with knees bent, back leaning at about 60 degrees against a support. Remove the support and hold.

Track each one against yourself. A back extensor hold shorter than your flexor hold is common and worth training.

## Your test sheet

| Test | Date | Result | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rockport or Cooper | | | |
| Push-ups | | | |
| Pull-ups or rows | | | |
| Vertical jump | | | |
| Broad jump | | | |
| Knee-to-wall (L / R) | | | |
| Side plank (L / R) | | | |

## Related guides

- Tracking your progress
- Setting goals that stick

## Related articles

- Measuring your progress
- How accurate is your body-fat number?
- The cardio dose