

Measuring Your Fitness Progress

If you've been exercising regularly, you'll soon be able to tell when it's time to move ahead in your activities.

When you can lift a weight easily or your endurance activity no longer feels challenging, it's time to exercise a little longer, or make an activity a little more challenging.

These simple monthly tests are good ways to see if you are continuing to progress and need to update your goals. Each month, you will likely see an improvement.

- **Endurance.** Pick a fixed course and see how long it takes to walk that distance. As your endurance improves, it should take less time.
- **Upper-body Strength.** Count the number of arm curls* you can do safely in 2 minutes.
- **Lower-body Strength.** Count the number of chair stands* you can do safely in 2 minutes.
- **Balance.** Time yourself as you stand on one foot, without support, for as long as possible. Stand near something sturdy to hold on to, in case you lose your balance. Repeat on the other foot.
- **Flexibility.** For this test, sit toward the front of a sturdy chair, and stretch one leg straight out in front of you with your heel on the floor and your toes pointing up. Bend the other leg and place your foot flat on the floor. Slowly bend from your hips and reach as far as you can toward the toes of your outstretched foot. How far can you reach before you feel a stretch?

* For instructions, go to www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life.



Quick Tip

As you increase your activity, you'll probably notice other signs that you're becoming more fit, such as increased energy, greater ability to perform daily tasks, or even an improved outlook on life.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Read more about increasing your activity level.
- Print useful tools.
- Order a free exercise guide or DVD.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

National Institutes of Health

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