

Getting Started: What's Your Fitness Level?

Want to be more physically active? The key to being successful and safe is to build slowly from your current fitness level. To find your starting point, answer the following questions:

Determine your current activity level.

- How much time do you spend sitting?
- How much time and how often are you active?
- When you're active, what kinds of activities are you doing?

Test your fitness.

- **Endurance.** Pick a fixed course—once around the block or from one end of the mall to the other. Time how long it takes you to walk it.
- **Upper-body strength.** Count how many arm curls* you can safely do in 2 minutes.
- **Lower-body strength.** Count how many chair stands* you can safely do in 2 minutes.
- **Balance.** How long can you safely stand on one foot? (Stand next to something sturdy you can hold on to if you lose your balance.)
- **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?

Write down your results

- If the exercises were hard, do what's comfortable and slowly build up.
- If they were easy, you know your level of fitness is higher. You can be more ambitious and challenge yourself.

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



Quick Tip

Test your fitness once a month. It's a great way to gauge your progress and celebrate your successes!

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Read more tips.
- Print useful tools.
- Order a free exercise guide or DVD.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

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