

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is cardiovascular fitness?

Cardiovascular fitness is an important component of overall physical fitness and is defined as the body's maximal ability to use oxygen at the cellular level during exercise. Several terms are interchangeable with cardiovascular fitness such as aerobic power, aerobic capacity and maximal oxygen consumption. The latter term—often abbreviated max as VO_2 —is the maximal volume of oxygen the body can utilize during a specified period of intense exercise.

What is the CooperFit™ test?

CooperFit cardiovascular fitness test provides an accurate and validated prediction of fitness level based on predicted max VO_2 . The CooperFit test does not diagnose cardiovascular disease. Based on more than 50 years of evaluation and fitness testing at Cooper Clinic, predicted max VO_2 is used to provide your level of cardiovascular fitness in one of six categories and percentile ranking (1-100%).

Superior (95-100%)

Excellent (80-94%)

Good (60-79%)

Fair (40-59%)

FIT

Poor (20-39%)

Very Poor (0-19%)

UNFIT

Who should take the CooperFit test?

The CooperFit test is best designed for individuals between 18 and 70 years of age. You should not participate in the test if you have uncontrolled hypertension, are taking medication that suppresses heart rate (for example, beta blockers, calcium channel blockers and digoxin), have a pacemaker or have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. If you have any health-related concerns regarding your ability to perform the CooperFit test, you should consult with your physician.

How is the CooperFit test conducted?

The CooperFit test is conducted by completing a one-mile walk, 12-minute run or 1.5-mile run.

You perform the test on a treadmill or a precisely measured track while wearing a heart rate monitor. Your CooperFit™ technician determines which test method is best for you. An accurate test result requires walking or running as fast as you can for the duration of the test.

How is my cardiovascular fitness level calculated?

Your test performance is used to calculate a predicted max VO_2 that provides an age and gender-specific percentile ranking. Fitness categories are calculated by using your age, gender and results from the CooperFit test.



CooperFit™

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What is the significance of my cardiovascular fitness level?

Research demonstrates that improving your fitness level beyond the Very Poor category can decrease your risk of dying from all causes by 58%, decrease chronic disease risk, decrease health care costs and improve symptom-related quality of life factors. Your fitness level is a valuable piece of health information. In fact, Cooper Aerobics and American Heart Association consider it a vital sign of health.

How do I prepare for my cardiovascular fitness test?

Refrain from caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, vaping and eating a heavy meal for at least four hours prior to testing. Do not exercise vigorously on the day of your test. Hydrate adequately before your appointment. Dress in comfortable, easy-to-move-in clothing. Wear proper footwear for physical activity.

How do I improve my cardiovascular fitness level?

The first step in improving your cardiovascular fitness is to achieve consistency in exercise. Select cardiovascular exercise you enjoy. If you are beginning an exercise program, start slowly and gradually increase your amount each week.

For substantial health benefits, 150 minutes or more of moderate-intensity cardiovascular exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity cardiovascular exercise per week are recommended. Moderate-intensity is defined as 12-14 Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) and vigorous-intensity is defined as 15-18 RPE. Refer to the Borg Scale of Perceived Exertion on the following page. It is advised to spread your minutes throughout the week instead of accumulating them all in one day.

When should I test again?

For those in the Very Poor and Poor categories of fitness, the recommended time to retest is 12 weeks. Keep in mind, it may take as long as 12-16 weeks to see an improvement in your cardiovascular fitness level. For those in the Fair or higher categories of fitness, 12 months is the recommended time between tests. During this time, follow the exercise program given to you by the CooperFit technician and track your progress.

“Our method of fitness evaluation has been the backbone of our practice since 1970.”

- Tyler C. Cooper, MD, MPH, President and CEO, Cooper Aerobics



BORG SCALE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION

6	Very, very light
7	
8	Very light
9	
10	
11	Fairly light
12	
13	Somewhat hard
14	
15	Hard
16	
17	Very hard
18	
19	Very, very hard
20	