



THE 1-MILE WALK TEST

A simple field test that reflects how well your body is built to keep moving.

WHY THIS TEST MATTERS

Your 1-mile walk time is a stand-in for your VO2 max — the maximum amount of oxygen your body can use during effort. Think of VO2 max as a whole-system score for how well your heart, lungs, and muscles work together.

Here's why that's worth caring about: VO2 max is one of the strongest predictors of healthspan — not just how long you live, but how many of those years you stay active, independent, and feeling good. Research consistently links higher cardiorespiratory fitness to a lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and early death, and to keeping the energy to do daily life — stairs, travel, carrying groceries, keeping up with the people you love — without getting winded.

And the best part: VO2 max is highly trainable at any age. Most people improve a full fitness category in 8–12 weeks of consistent brisk walking and Zone 2 cardio — which makes a retest one of the most motivating numbers you can track.

Sources: Mandsager et al., JAMA Network Open, 2018 (PMID 30357390) • Strasser & Burtscher, "Survival of the fittest: VO2max, a key predictor of longevity?" 2018 (PMID 29293447) • Every 3.5 ml/kg/min rise in VO2 max ≈ 13% lower mortality risk (JACC).

HOW TO DO THE TEST

- Measure a flat 1-mile course (a track is ideal — 4 laps + a little = 1 mile). Use the same course each time.
- Warm up with 5–10 minutes of easy walking.
- Walk 1 mile as fast as you can — walk, don't run; keep one foot on the ground.
- Record your time and your heart rate the moment you finish.
- Have a smart watch (like an Apple Watch)? Use it to measure your mile and track your time and heart rate — it makes this easy.

And relax — don't stress over a second or two hitting start or stop. This is general feedback on your fitness, not a race. We're not trying to qualify for the Senior Olympics here.

WOMEN — 1-MILE WALK NORMS (MINUTES)

Age	Poor	Average	Above Avg	Excellent
40–49	>16	14–16	13–14	<13
50–59	>17	15–17	14–15	<14
60–69	>18	16–18	15–16	<15
70+	>19	17–19	16–17	<16

Source: Kline et al., *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 1987 (PMID 3600239) / Rockport Walking Test.

MEN — 1-MILE WALK NORMS (MINUTES)

Age	Poor	Average	Above Avg	Excellent
40–49	>15	14–15	13–14	<13
50–59	>16	14–16	13–14	<13.5
60–69	>17	15–17	14–15	<14
70+	>20	16–19	15–16	<15

Source: Cooper Institute / American Council on Exercise age-graded walk standards (simplified to whole minutes).