

ROCKPORT FITNESS WALKING TEST

If it is not possible for you to get a test administered by a professional, there are still ways to get some of the vital information you need about your cardiorespiratory fitness before you get started on the exercise program. The one that I think is most convenient is the Rockport Fitness Walking Test.

For this test you are asked to walk one mile as fast as you can, and then to record your heart rate as soon as you've finished, as well as the time it took you to complete the mile. (I don't want to hear any excuses about not being able to figure out how far a mile is—use a premeasured walking path or a high-school track, or measure a route using the odometer on your car.) To take your pulse immediately after walking a mile, count beats at the carotid artery (your neck) for 15 seconds, then multiply by 4. Even better, you can wear a heart rate monitor.

Rockport Fitness Walking Test Results:

My body weight (BW): _____

My age (A): _____

My gender (G) (0 for female, 1 for male): _____

My time to walk one mile (T): _____

My heart rate immediately after walking one mile (HR): _____

VO₂MAX

By plugging the information derived from the Rockport Fitness Walking Test into the formula below, you get an accurate prediction of your VO₂max, or the point at which your oxygen intake is at its peak. VO₂max is one of the best indicators of cardiorespiratory fitness.

$$\text{VO}_2\text{max} = 132.853 - (0.0769 \times \text{BW}) - (0.3877 \times \text{A}) + \\ (6.315 \times \text{G}) - (3.2649 \times \text{T}) - (0.1565 \times \text{HR})$$

Example: You walked one mile in 15.75 minutes and your heart rate at the end of that mile was 155 beats per minute. You are a thirty-two-year-old woman who weighs 180 pounds. Therefore, your VO₂max formula looks like this:

$$132.853 - (0.0769 \times 180) - (0.3877 \times 32) + \\ (6.315 \times 0) - (3.2649 \times 15.75) - (0.1565 \times 155) = \\ 132.853 - 13.842 - 12.406 + 0 - 51.422 - 24.258 = 30.925 \\ \text{VO}_2\text{max score of 30.925 for a thirty-two-year-old woman} \\ \text{VO}_2\text{max rating of fair}$$

Once you've established your VO₂max, see where you rate according to the following table. As you work out on a regular basis, your VO₂max can improve. Remember that this number is the maximum amount of oxygen that can be used by your body for maximal sustained exercise. This oxygen is necessary to turn fat and sugar into energy so you can burn it off. The more your VO₂max improves, the more oxygen you can bring into your body, and the better you become at breaking down fat and sugar and burning them off as fuel.

VO ₂ MAX RATINGS					
WOMEN					
Rating	Score				
	(AGES 20-29)	(AGES 30-39)	(AGES 40-49)	(AGES 50-59)	(AGES 60-69)
LOW	Below 28	Below 27	Below 25	Below 21	Below 16
FAIR	29-34	28-32	26-30	22-27	17-22
AVERAGE	35-43	33-41	31-39	28-36	23-30
GOOD	44-48	42-47	40-44	37-41	31-36
EXCELLENT	Over 48	Over 47	Over 44	Over 41	Over 37

(continued)

MEN					
	(AGES 20-29)	(AGES 30-39)	(AGES 40-49)	(AGES 50-59)	(AGES 60-69)
LOW	Below 37	Below 34	Below 30	Below 24	Below 21
FAIR	38-43	35-38	31-35	25-30	22-26
AVERAGE	44-51	39-47	36-43	31-38	27-35
GOOD	52-56	48-51	44-46	39-43	36-38
EXCELLENT	Over 56	Over 51	Over 46	Over 43	Over 38

Table 1

YOUR VO₂

VO₂max Score: _____

VO₂max Rating: _____

Have a look at the VO₂max numbers of some athletes:

General Population, Female, Ages 20-29: 35-43 ml/kg/min

General Population, Male, Ages 20-29: 44-51

U.S. College Track, Male: 57.4

College Students, Male: 44.6

Highest Recorded Female (cross-country skier): 74

Highest Recorded Male (cross-country skier): 94

Lance Armstrong, professional cyclist: 83.7

Greg LeMond, professional cyclist: 92.5

Frank Shorter, U.S. Olympic marathon winner: 71.3

Ingrid Kristiansen, ex-marathon world record holder: 71.2

Rosa Mota, marathon runner: 67.2

Derek Clayton, Australian ex-marathon world record holder: 69.7

Jarmila Kratochvílová, Czech Olympian 400m/800m winner: 72.8