

Special Olympics

Adult Fitness Assessment

Manual

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Introduction



Special Olympics Fitness

Fitness is the state of optimal health and performance through adequate physical activity, nutrition, and hydration. For our athletes to be fit, they must practice healthy habits year-round and across the lifespan. Special Olympics fitness programming and resources empower athletes and their supporters to take charge of their own health and fitness by providing education, social support, opportunities and tools to track progress.

Physical fitness is a key part of the Special Olympics mission. Good health and physical fitness are essential to sports participation and for overall quality of life. The physical activity components of endurance, strength, flexibility and balance transcend into all sports. Athletes who have higher levels of fitness may outperform their peers by running faster, throwing farther, and jumping higher. Fitter athletes are also at a lower risk of illness and injury, which could limit their participation in practices, competitions, or entire sports seasons. Healthy lifestyle choices in nutrition and hydration also optimize a player's performance.

Special Olympics is committed to providing sports opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities that span from early youth to late adulthood. Fitness can help our athletes reach their personal best each season and continue their journey in Special Olympics sports for their entire lives.

Importance of Fitness Assessment

Special Olympics athletes strive toward their personal best in sport and in life. Fitness assessments provide insight into an athlete's strengths and areas of improvement. By conducting simple field tests, coaches, athletes, and families can get a clear picture of each athlete's fitness level so that they can celebrate current abilities and identify areas for growth. These insights can inform practice plans and at-home activities that support each athlete to train smarter, stay healthier, and perform better.

Fitness assessment can be an exciting opportunity for athletes to:

- Learn more about their bodies,
- Recognize their progress, and
- Celebrate the results of their hard work.

When done with encouragement, clarity, and purpose, fitness assessment can be a fun and motivating way to show athletes that they are making measurable progress in a way that impacts both sport performance and overall health.

Types of Fitness Tests

There are several components of fitness that contribute to sport performance and can be the focus of training programs. Tests can be categorized by the fitness component that they measure:

Balance tests measure the ability to stay upright or maintain control of posture during sports movements. Improved balance means fewer missteps or falls during complicated skills or tasks, which improves success rates of challenging plays and reduces risk of injuries.

- Single Leg Stance

Cardiovascular Endurance tests measure the ability to keep moving for long periods of time. Improved endurance might mean an athlete is able to practice with fewer breaks, outrun opponents, and go farther distances. Athletes with improved endurance often make less mistakes when fatigued.

- 6-Minute Walk

Flexibility tests measure the ability to move easily through a range of motion. Improved flexibility means it is easier to do sports skills with the correct form. Flexibility also helps prevent injuries.

- Modified Sit-and-Reach
- Shoulder Flexibility

Power tests measure the ability to move with force. Improved power means more explosive running starts, throws, and jumps.

- Standing Long Jump

Speed & Agility tests measure the ability to accelerate or move quickly and how well an athlete quickly changes directions while moving. Improved speed & agility makes it easier to respond to moving targets like other players and balls, complete races or escape opponents.

- 10-Meter Agility Shuttle Run

Strength tests measure the maximum amount of force a muscle group can generate at a given time. Improved strength might mean an athlete is able to jump higher, throw farther, and sprint faster.

- Curl-Up
- Hand Grip Strength
- Maximum Push-Ups
- Isometric Push-Up Hold (Plank)
- Sit-to-Stand

Planning for Fitness Testing

As you plan to conduct fitness testing, consider how you can create a positive and meaningful experience for your athletes. Select the tests that are best for your team and organize the session in a way that helps each athlete feel comfortable, confident, and ready to do their best. For example, some athletes may find it motivating to test in a group, while others may do better one-on-one. Most importantly, allow athletes to make the choice whether to participate in the testing or not.

When planning your team's fitness assessments, follow these simple steps:

1. Determine How Frequently to Test

Aim to test your athletes **at least twice**:

- **Before** a sport season or fitness program
- **After** the sports season or fitness program to measure progress

If your season or program is longer than 12 weeks, consider testing at the **midpoint** also. This helps you adjust your training plans based on athlete progress.

2. Select Your Fitness Tests and Review the Protocols

When selecting your tests, ask yourself:

- Which tests reflect the fitness components most important for my athletes' sport or goals?
- Can I conduct these tests with the time, space, and equipment I have available?
- Am I confident in explaining and scoring these tests fairly and clearly?

Each test has specific steps. Take a few minutes to review the test protocols so that you can administer each test correctly including providing clear instructions and demonstrating how to do each test.

Aim to conduct **five or fewer tests** so athletes stay motivated and engaged. For fitness tests to be accurate and give meaningful results, **athletes must give their best effort**. This can be challenging for people with IDD, because hard work can feel uncomfortable or even scary. Some athletes may not recognize what maximum effort feels like and stop early. Coaches can support them by offering practice runs, giving lots of encouragement, and explaining that discomfort is normal and okay.

3. Prepare for the Testing Session

- **Communicate:** Share details about the fitness testing session with your athletes.
- **Gather Equipment:** Review the list of supplies for each test and make sure you have access to the items in working order.
- **Enlist Support:** Support is available to help make your fitness testing session more efficient. You don't have to do it all yourself!
- **Connect with your Special Olympics Program:** they might be able to assist you in identifying additional volunteers who can assist you.
- **Partner with a Special Olympics Fitness Coach:** fitness professionals may be able to co-lead the testing session, suggest tests, or help interpret results.
- **Determine Schedule and Format:** When planning the testing session, consider the order of tests and how athletes transition between tests. Ensure there is sufficient time for athletes to rest so they can give their best effort.

4. Conduct the Fitness Testing

Set Athletes up for Success: Taking time to familiarize athletes with the test protocols and expectations can ease anxiety, increase confidence, and improve performance.

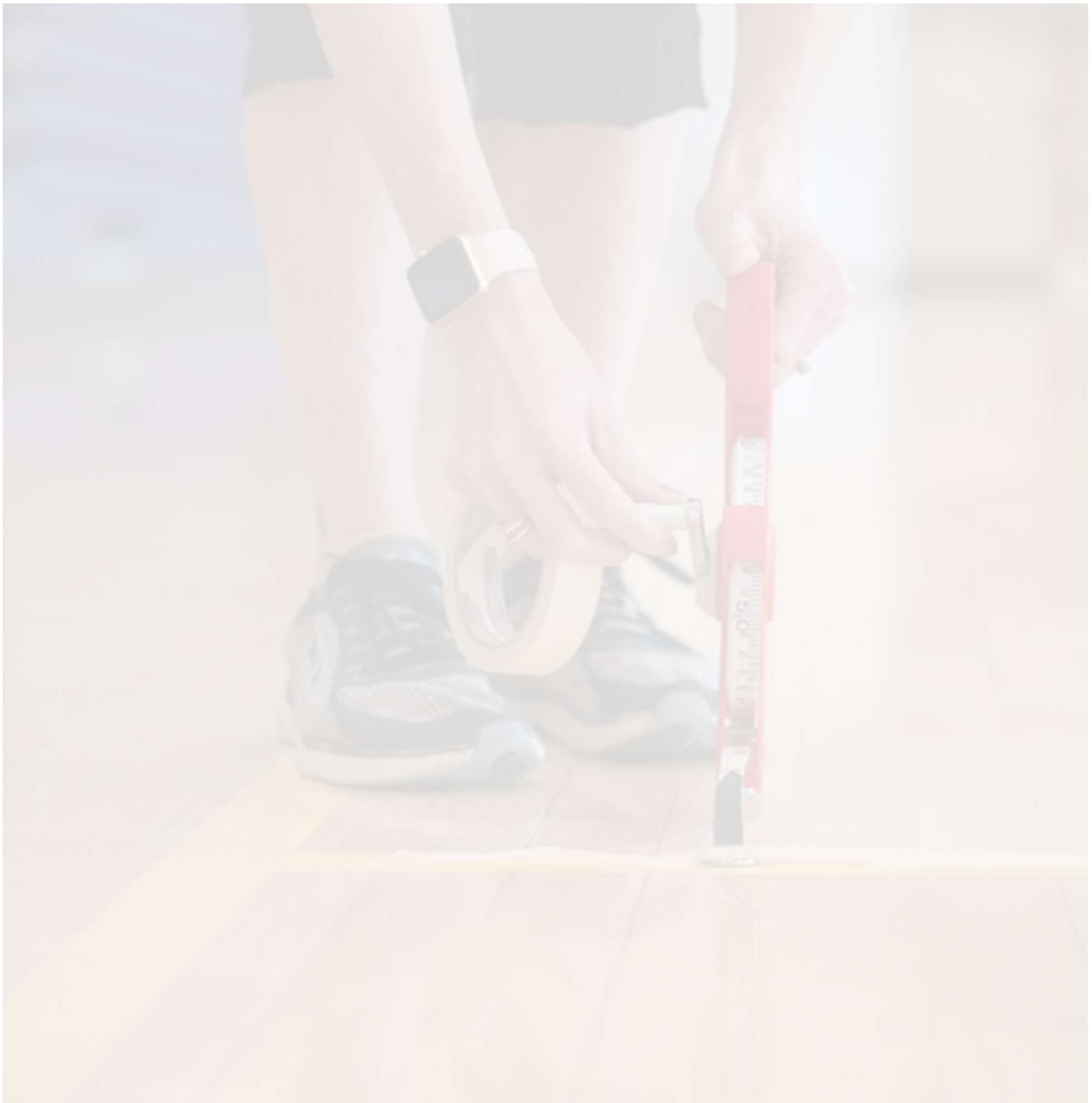
Follow these steps:

- Show athletes the testing space and equipment
- Introduce the testers
- Review the order of tests to help athletes prepare for what is ahead
- Try it out! Each testing protocol includes steps to explain the test purpose, demonstrate the test, and allow athletes to practice

Encourage Best Effort: To draw out a best effort on the tests, start the session with a few **short "best effort" drills**, like fast feet or jumping on the spot, and say: *Try this as fast as you can! It's okay if you feel your heart beating or muscles working. That means you're doing great!*

Ensure Accuracy: when you record scores on the Fitness Assessment Recording Sheet. Make sure to set up the equipment carefully and measure and count correctly. Being accurate helps you see how each athlete is improving over time.

Fitness Testing Protocols



Endurance: 6-Minute Walk

Objective:

To walk as far as possible in 6 minutes.

Purpose:

The 6-Minute Walk test is a sub-maximal test of endurance.



Recording the Score

Calculate the total distance by multiplying the number of laps by the length of the course plus the extra distance for partially completed laps. **Record in meters.**

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch
- 2 cones
- Measuring tape
- Lap counter (optional)

Space and Setup:

Use an indoor or outdoor track, long hallway, gym, or field that has a flat surface.

A 30-meter straight walking course is easiest to mark out and measure (15 meters is acceptable). Use a cone to mark the starting point, measure 30 meters and mark the turnaround point with another cone.

Pacer (optional, highly encouraged): Using a pacer can help athletes stay motivated, prevent boredom, and maintain a steady pace throughout the test.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This is an endurance test to see how far you can walk in 6 minutes. You will walk as fast as you can, but do not run or jog.*
- **Demonstrate:** Walk 2-3 laps of the course. Walk back and forth between the cones at a brisk pace. Stay close to the cones on the turns and do not slow down.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete walk 1-2 laps and provide guidance on the turns and speed.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** Walk like you are in a hurry and keep going for 6 minutes. Ready? Go!
- **Encourage:** Cheer on the athlete to keep a brisk walking pace. Lots of cheering is helpful because athletes may lose focus or interest.
- **Use a Pacer:** A teammate or coach can be a pacer and walk a few steps ahead of the athlete and give encouragement throughout the test.
- Count the number of 30-meter laps.
- Give notice with 30 seconds left.
- **Say Stop!** At exactly 6 minutes. The athlete should freeze on the spot.
- **Measure:** Mark the spot where the athlete finished and measure the distance from the cone to the stopping point. If you are testing multiple athletes at the same time, they can hold an item (e.g., scarf, pen) and place it on the ground to mark where they stop.

Variation #1: 6-Minute Run

Objective:

To jog or run as far as possible for 6 minutes.

Purpose:

The 6-Minute Run test measures aerobic endurance and is an alternative to the walk test for participants with higher levels of fitness.

Preparing to Test

The preparation and protocol for the 6-Minute Run is identical to the walk test, only the participant is instructed to jog or run for the duration of the test.

Recording the Score

Calculate the total distance by multiplying the number of laps by the length of the course plus the extra distance for partially completed laps. **Record in meters.**

Variation #2: 6-Minute Push

Objective:

To push as far as possible for 6 minutes.

Purpose:

The 6-Minute Push test measures aerobic endurance and is an alternative to the walk test for athletes who use wheelchairs for mobility.

Preparing to Test

The preparation and protocol for the 6-Minute Push is identical to the walk test only the participant is instructed to push their wheelchair for the duration of the test.

Recording the Score

Calculate the total distance by multiplying the number of laps by the length of the course plus the extra distance for partially completed laps. **Record in meters.**



Speed: 10-Meter Agility Shuttle Run

Objective:

To run as fast as possible and quickly change direction between two lines.

Purpose:

The 10-Meter Agility Shuttle Run measures speed of movement, agility, and body control.



Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch
- 2 cones
- Measuring tape
- Two small props/items (balls, beanbags, or blocks).

Space and Setup:

On a flat, non-slip surface, use cones to mark two lines 10 meters apart. Place two props on the starting line.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This is a test to see how fast you can run and change directions. You'll pick up the balls and run back and forth at top speed.*
- **Demonstrate:** Complete the shuttle run at a slow pace and show the athlete how to pick up and place the props.
- Start by standing behind the starting line with two props on the line.
- Pick up one prop, run to the far line, and place the prop down on the line (no throwing).
- Run back to the start line, pick up the second prop, run to the far line and place it down.
- Sprint back to the start line.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete walk through the pattern once while practicing picking up and placing the props.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *Run as fast as you can and I will time you. Ready? Go!*
- **Start timing** when you say "Go."
- **Encourage:** Cheer on the athlete to run as fast as possible, make quick turns, and run through the finish.
- **Stop timing** when the athlete crosses the line after placing both blocks.
- **Repeat:** Do the test 2 times with at least 3 minutes of rest between attempts.

Recording the Score

Record the time to complete the shuttle run in **seconds**. The best attempt is used.

Power: Standing Long Jump

Objective:

To jump as far as possible using both feet.

Purpose:

The Standing Long Jump test measures leg power.



Recording the Score

Record the distance jumped in **centimeters**. The best attempt is used.

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Tape measure
- Floor tape, chalk or preexisting line

Space and Setup:

On a flat, non-slip surface, mark a start line with tape, chalk, or use a pre-existing line.

It is easiest (but not necessary) to measure jump distance if you secure the tape measure to the floor.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how strong and powerful your legs are. You will jump forward as far as you can using both feet. It will be like jumping out over a big puddle or an imaginary hole in the ground!*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete 1-2 jumps using the correct form. Focus on jumping forward (far, long) and not upward.
- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart with toes just behind the takeoff line.
- Bend the knees and swing the arms to help with forward movement.
- Jump forward with both feet at the same time and land on both feet together. Keep balanced without falling backward.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice 1-2 jumps.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *Push hard with your legs and jump way out keeping your feet together. Freeze like a statue when you land. Ready? Go!*
- Stand to the side with the measuring tape ready (if not already secured to the floor).
- **Encourage:** Jumping forward (instead of upward) can be new and difficult for some athletes.
- **Measure:** Mark the back of the heel closest to the start line where the athlete first lands with chalk or tape. Measure the distance from the start line to the heel mark.
- **Repeat:** Do the test 2-3 times with at least 1 minute of rest between attempts.

Balance: Single Leg Stance

Objective:

To stand on one leg and maintain balance for as long as possible.

Purpose:

The Single-Leg Stance test measures static balance and postural control.



Recording the Score

Record the time completed before loss of balance in **seconds**. Note which leg was used.

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch

Space and Setup

Use a flat, non-slip surface.

Position the athlete near a stable object, like a wall or chair, for safety. They should not use it for support during the test.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *We're going to see how long you can balance on one leg. The goal is to stay as still as possible, without moving your hands or putting your foot down.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete the correct form for standing on one leg without holding on.
- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hands on the hips. Stand near something stable just in case.
- Place one foot against the inside of the opposite knee. If that's too tricky, it's okay to bend the knee and just keep the foot off the ground. Keep the standing leg straight and eyes forward.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice the standing position on each leg and hold for a few seconds.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *Lift your foot up and get steady on one leg. I will time how long you can balance without moving. Ready? Go!*
- **Choose a Leg:** Athlete starts with either leg, just be sure to record which one.
- **Start timing** once they are in the correct position and balanced.
- **Encourage:** Praise the athlete for staying focused.
- **Stop timing** when the athlete moves their standing foot, their lifted foot touches the ground or loses contact with the knee, their hands come off their hips, or they grab onto something for balance
- **Repeat:** Do the test twice, one time on each leg.

Flexibility: Modified Apley's Shoulder Flexibility

Objective:

To touch the fingertips together behind the back.

Purpose:

The Modified Apley's Shoulder Flexibility test measures shoulder rotation and range of motion.

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Ruler or tape measure

Recording the Score

Record the distance between the middle fingertips as a negative number, or the overlap between fingertips as a positive number. **Record the distance in inches or centimeters. Note which arm was on top (right or left).**



Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** This test checks how flexible your shoulders are. You will try to touch your fingertips together behind your back. One arm goes over the shoulder, the other comes up from below.
- **Demonstrate:** Show the movement slowly and hold for a few seconds.
- Stand tall and raise one hand. Bend the elbow so it points upwards and reach the hand down the back. Palm should touch the back so that fingers point down.
- Reach the other arm behind the lower back. Bend the elbow so that it points downwards. Palm should face away from the back and fingers point up.
- Get the fingertips of both hands to touch or as close together as possible.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice the position two times before taking the test. Gently guide their arms if needed.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** Slowly reach back like you are trying to scratch your back. Try to touch your fingertips, I will measure how close they are. Ready? Go!
- **Encourage:** Praise good effort and slow movement – this can be challenging for athletes.
- After they begin, the **athlete holds their best position** for 2-3 seconds while you measure.
- **Measure:** Use a ruler or tape measure to measure the distance between the middle fingertips, or the overlap of the fingertips.
- **Repeat:** Test both sides, so each arm is on top and then on bottom.

Flexibility: Modified Sit-and-Reach

Objective:

To reach forward as far as possible with legs straight.

Purpose:

The Modified Sit-and-Reach test measures flexibility of the hamstrings and lower back.



Recording the Score

Record a reach before the baseline as a negative number, or a reach past the baseline as a positive number. **Record the distance in inches or centimeters. The best attempt is used.**

Preparing to test

Supplies:

- Tape measure
- Floor tape, chalk, or pre-existing line

Space and Setup:

Mark a 24-inch line on the floor using tape, chalk, or use a pre-existing line. This is the baseline.

Secure a measuring tape perpendicular to the baseline with the end of the tape at least 10 inches on one side of the baseline. This is the measuring line.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how flexible or 'bendable' your legs and lower back are. You'll sit on the floor and reach forward as far as you can while keeping your legs straight.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete how to sit and reach forward using the correct form. Do 2-3 slow repetitions.
- Remove shoes and sit on the floor with legs straight and apart, making a V shape (feet about 12 inches apart). Position heels just behind the baseline. Extend arms forward with one hand on top of the other, palms facing down. Fingers should start on the measuring line between the legs.
- Keeping legs straight, reach forward slowly as far as possible and slide hands along the measuring line. Hold the farthest reach for 1-2 seconds.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice slowly reaching all the way forward 2-3 times. Give simple tips like *Keep your legs straight* or *reach slowly and smoothly, no bouncing*.
- **Caution:** If the athlete is unable to fully straighten their legs or has pain, encourage them to have "soft knees" and have a slight bend. Record this on the score sheet.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *Reach forward slowly as far as you can and hold it. Take a breath in and then reach forward as you breathe out. Keep your legs straight. I will measure how far you go. Ready? Go!*
- The athlete reaches forward with both hands along the line, holding the farthest distance.
- **Encourage:** Praise slow movement and straight legs. Cheer them on!
- **Measure:** When they get to their farthest point, measure the distance on the line where their fingertips reach.
- **Repeat:** Do the test 3 times with at least 30 seconds of rest between attempts.

Muscular Strength: Hand Grip Strength

Objective:

To squeeze the hand grip dynamometer as hard as possible.

Purpose:

The Hand Grip Strength test measures strength of the hand and forearm and is an indicator of overall muscular strength.



Recording the Score

Record the number on the dynamometer dial in **pounds or kilograms**. **Note which hand was used.** The best attempt is used.

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Hand Grip Dynamometer

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how strong your muscles are. You're going to squeeze the grip strength tool as hard as you can.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete how to hold and squeeze the dynamometer.
- Adjust the dynamometer for the athlete so that their fingers wrap around the middle of the handle. Set the dial to zero.
- The elbow is bent at 90 degrees and the arm should stay close to the side of the body.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice with each hand and give feedback to make sure their form is correct.

Test Directions

- **Choose a Hand:** Athlete starts with either hand, just be sure to record which one.
- **Cue Test:** *Squeeze as hard as you can and hold it for 5 seconds! Ready? Go!*
- **Encourage:** Count aloud for 5 seconds. Cheer on the athlete to give their best effort!
- **Reset:** Always reset the dynamometer to zero before the next squeeze.
- **Repeat:** Do the test 2 times on each hand with at least 30 seconds of rest between attempts.

Muscular Strength: Maximal Repetition Curl-Up

Objective:

To perform as many continuous curl-ups as possible using the correct form.

Purpose:

The Maximal Repetition Curl-Up test measures abdominal strength and endurance.

Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Mat
- Metronome (optional)

Space and Setup:

Use a flat, clean surface. A metronome can be used to provide a continuous cadence for participants to follow, however, this is optional.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how strong your stomach muscles are by doing curl-ups. You'll do as many curl-ups as you can without stopping.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the correct curl-up form and do a few repetitions at a slow, steady pace.
- Lie back on the mat with knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Hands rest on the front of the thighs.
- Slowly lift the shoulders and head while sliding hands up until fingertips touch the knees. Slowly lower back down until the head touches the mat.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice 2-3 curl-ups. Give feedback to correct their form.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** Do as many curl-ups as you can in a row using the proper form. I will count how many you do. Ready? Go!
- The athlete should keep a steady pace, about one curl-up every 3 seconds, without stopping or pausing.
- Count only the reps using the correct form.
- **Encourage:** Cheer on the athlete with positive words! Counting out loud can be motivating, too.
- **Stop** the test when the athlete stops or pauses, or doesn't use the correct curl-up form for two repetitions in a row. This could be that their:
 - Shoulders don't come up
 - Fingertips don't reach the knees
 - Head doesn't touch the mat
 - Feet lift off the ground

Recording the Score

Record the number of **repetitions** using correct form.

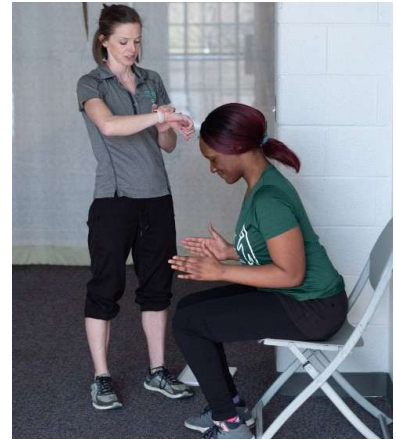
Muscular Strength: Timed Sit-to-Stand

Objective:

To perform 10 stands from a seated position as quickly as possible.

Purpose:

The Timed Sit-to-Stand test measures lower body muscular strength and endurance.



Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch
- Chair or bench

Space and Setup:

Use a flat, nonslip surface. Position the chair or bench against a wall if possible; bleachers can also be used.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how strong your legs are. You will stand up and sit down 10 times as fast as you can without using your hands.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete a few repetitions at a medium pace emphasizing full standing and full sitting without using arms to push off.
- Sit on the chair or bench with feet flat on the ground about hip distance apart
- Keep arms bent 90 degrees and elbows tucked in.
- Stand up all the way and then sit back down fully.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice 2-3 reps of the movements.

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *I am going to time to see how fast you can do the sit and stand 10 times. No hands! Ready? Go!*
- **Start timing** when they begin the first standing movement.
- **Encourage:** It helps to count the reps out loud and remind to *Stand up tall* and *No hands*
- **Stop timing** when the athlete sits down after the 10th stand.
- **Repeat:** Do the test 2 times with at least 1 minute of rest between attempts.

Recording the Score

Record the time it takes to perform 10 repetitions in **seconds**. The best attempt is used.

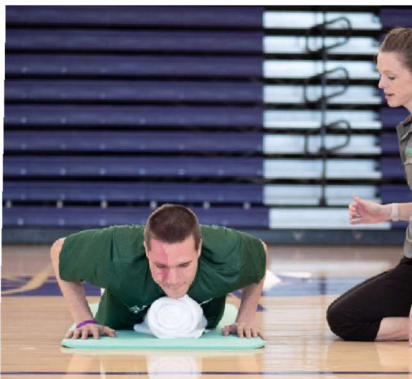
Muscular Strength: Maximum Repetition Push-Up

Objective:

To perform as many continuous push-ups as possible using the correct form.

Purpose:

The Maximum Repetition Push-Up measures upper body muscular strength and endurance.



Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Mat (optional)
- Small ball or soft item (optional)
- Metronome (optional)

Space and Setup:

Use a flat, clean surface. To assist athletes in using correct form, a small ball or soft item (e.g., rolled up towel) may be placed under the chest.

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *This test checks how strong your upper body muscles are by doing push-ups. You'll do as many push-ups as you can without stopping.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete the correct straight form for the pushup and do a few repetitions at a steady pace.
 - Place hands flat on the ground, under the shoulders, and arms straight. Legs are out straight, and toes are on the ground.
 - From head to heels, keep the body straight and level. Hips should not drop, and the bottom should not be up.
 - Lower down until elbows are bent to 90 degrees or the chest touches the ball/towel, and then push up until arms are straight.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice 2-3 push-ups. Give them feedback like *tighten your belly, make your body long and strong, keep a good pace.*

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *Do as many push-ups as you can in a row using the proper form. I will count how many you do. Ready? Go!*
- The athlete should keep a steady pace without frequent rest or pausing.
- Count only the reps using the correct form.
- **Encourage:** Use positive words and remind athlete to breathe!
- If the athlete loses form during the test, remind them how to correct it or gently guide them.
- **Stop** the test when the athlete stops or pauses for longer than 5 seconds, or doesn't use the correct push-up form for two repetitions in a row. This could be that they:
 - Drop or lift their hips
 - Do not fully straighten their arms when pushing up
 - Bend their knees
 - Do not lower down far enough

Recording the score

Record the number of push-ups completed using correct form.

Muscular Strength: Isometric Push-Up

Objective:

To hold a push-up position (high plank) for as long as possible.

Purpose:

The Isometric Push-Up test measures upper body muscular strength and endurance and core stability.

This test is an alternative to the Maximal Repetition Push-Up.



Preparing to Test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch
- Mat

Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *We're going to see how long you can stay strong like a board in a push-up position.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete the correct straight form for the pushup and hold for a few seconds.
 - Place hands flat on the ground, under the shoulders, and arms straight. Legs are out straight, and toes are on the ground.
 - From head to heels, keep the body straight and level. Hips should not drop, and the bottom should not be up.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice the push-up position and hold for a few seconds. Give them feedback like *tighten your belly, press through your feet and hands, make your body long and strong.*

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *I am going to time to see how long you can hold the pushup position. Keep your body tight. Ready? Go!"*
- **Start timing** once they are in the correct position with their body straight.
- **Encourage:** Remind the athlete to breathe while holding the straight position and cheer them on for being so strong and giving a great effort.
 - If the athlete starts to lose form during the test, remind them how to correct it or gently guide them.
- **Stop timing** when the athlete doesn't have the correct form for 5 seconds. This could be that they are:
 - Dropping or lifting their hips
 - Bending their arms
 - Bending their knees
- **Repeat:** If the athlete would like multiple attempts, do the test 2 times with at least 3-5 minutes of rest between attempts.

Recording the Score

Record the **number of seconds** that the athlete held the correct position. The best attempt is used.

Muscular Strength: Seated Isometric Push-Up

Objective:

To lift the body up out of a seated position and hold for as long as possible.

Purpose:

The Seated Isometric Push-Up test measures upper body muscular strength and endurance. This test is an alternative to the Isometric Push-Up test for athletes who use wheelchairs or are unable to assume a push-up position.

Recording the Score

Record the **number of seconds** that the athlete held the correct position.

Preparing to test

Supplies:

- Timer or stopwatch
- Wheelchair or chair with arm rests



Testing Protocol

Before the Test

- **Explain:** *We're going to see how long you can stay strong in a push-up position using the armrests on your chair.*
- **Demonstrate:** Show the athlete the form for the seated pushup and hold for a few seconds
 - Place hands on the armrests and push up until the arms are fully straight and lower body is raised up off the seat.
 - Feet should not be used to push and support the body.
- **Practice:** Let the athlete practice the push-up position and hold for a few seconds. Give them feedback like *straighten your arms, press through your hands, no pressure on your feet.*

Test Directions

- **Cue Test:** *I am going to time to see how long you can hold the pushup position. Keep your body raised up from the seat and arms straight. Ready? Go!*
- **Start timing** once they are in the correct position with their body raised out of the seat.
- **Encourage:** Remind the athlete to breathe while holding the raised position and cheer them on for being so strong and giving a great effort.
 - If the athlete starts to lose form during the test, remind them how to correct it or gently guide them.
- **Stop timing** when the athlete doesn't have the correct form for 5 seconds. This could be that they are:
 - Bending their arms and lower body touches the seat
 - Using their feet to raise up
- **Repeat:** If the athlete would like multiple attempts, do the test 2 times with at least 3-5 minutes of rest between attempts.

Recording and Applications

Special Olympics Adult Fitness Assessment Manual



Adult Fitness Assessment Recording Sheet

Athlete Name: _____ Assessment Date: _____

Test Name	Score				Notes (Adaptations, prompts used, etc.)
Single Leg Stance (sec) Record time that the position is held to the nearest <u>second</u> .	Right		Left		
6-Minute Walk, Run or Push (m) Walking distance is total number of laps x 30 meters + extra distance after the last full lap. Record the distance to the nearest <u>meter</u> .					
Modified Sit-and-Reach (in/cm) (+/-) Record the distance from fingertips to the baseline (negative) or past the baseline (positive) in <u>inches or centimeters</u> . Record "0" if fingertips just touch baseline.	Trial 1	Trial 2		Trial 3	
Modified Apley's Shoulder Flexibility (in/cm) Record the distance apart (negative) or overlap of (positive) the tips of middle fingers in <u>inches or centimeters</u> . Record "0" if fingertips just touch together.	Right		Left		
Trunk Lift (in/cm) Write down the distance from chin to floor in <u>inches or centimeters</u> . If the athlete cannot lift off the floor at all, record "0".	Trial 1	Trial 2		Trial 3	
Standing Long Jump (in/cm) Record the distance jumped in <u>inches or centimeters</u> for each trial.	Trial 1		Trial 2		
10-Meter Agility Shuttle Run (sec) Record the time in <u>seconds</u> for each trial.	Trial 1		Trial 2		
Maximum Repetition Curl-Up (#) Record the <u>total number</u> of curl-ups completed with proper form.					
Hand Grip Strength (lb/kg) Record the score of each trial on the left and ride hands to the nearest <u>pound or kilogram</u> .	Right		Left		
	Trial 1	Trial 2	Trial 1	Trial 2	
Maximum Repetition Push-Up (#) Record the number of push-ups completed using correct form.					
Isometric Push-Up (sec) Record the total time that correct position is held to the nearest <u>second</u> .					
Timed Sit-to-Stand (sec) Record the total time to perform the 10 repetitions to the nearest <u>second</u> .					

Athlete Scorecard: Know your Scores

Understand and use your Fitness Assessment results to achieve optimal fitness! Your coach will complete this scorecard with you for you to take home.

Athlete Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Test Name	My Best Score	How I Feel About it (Circle One)	My Target Score
		😊 😊 😊 😊	
		😊 😊 😊 😊	
		😊 😊 😊 😊	
		😊 😊 😊 😊	
		😊 😊 😊 😊	

Tips for Improving Fitness:

1. Move More!

Your [Fit 5](#) physical activity goal is to **exercise at least 5 days per week!** Try adding up your activity minutes for one week and see how you compare!

Check out these Special Olympics resources for exercise ideas and inspiration:

- [Fit 5 Exercise Cards and Videos](#)
- [School of Strength](#)
- [Fitness through Sport Playbook](#)

Don't forget to complete a [dynamic warm-up and cool-down](#) before and after every single workout, practice or competition!

2. Eat Healthy and Stay Hydrated

Good nutrition and hydration will provide you with energy, improve recovery, promote endurance, and support a healthy lifestyle. Aim to drink water every day and eat foods from the 5 food groups!

Check out these resources for nutrition information and inspiration:

- [Fit 5 Guide](#)
- [School of Strength: Snack Zone](#)
- [Fitness through Sport Playbook](#)

Athlete Scorecard **Homeplay**

Each sport requires different fitness skills, and each athlete has different interests, strengths and areas for improvement. Use the list below to see how each fitness test relates to your sport and your daily life.

Testing Area	What it Helps With	Where I Use this in My Sport	Where I Use this in Daily Life
Balance	Keeping your balance when you move, turn, or land		
Endurance	Having enough energy to keep going during games or practice		
Flexibility	Moving your body in a safe and controlled way		
Speed & Agility	Jumping, pushing, throwing, or staying still without falling		
Strength & Power	Running fast, reacting quickly, and changing direction during games		

Fitness Results in Coaching Practice

Fitness testing is a powerful tool – not just for measuring where athletes are today, but for guiding where they can go next. Once testing is complete, here's how you can make the most of the results:

- **Talk about the Testing with your Athletes:** Once the testing session is complete, it is a good idea to find out how the athletes felt about it. Here are a couple of reflection questions that you could use to discuss the session with your athletes.
 - *What was something you were proud of (giving your best effort, cheering on your teammates, setting a new personal record) during the testing?*
 - *What is something you would like to do differently (stay relaxed, hydrate more before testing, pace yourself, ask questions about the instructions) next time?*
- **Celebrate Strengths and Set Goals:** Highlight what each athlete does well to build confidence, then work together to identify areas for improvement. Use results to create personalized, motivating goals that can be tracked over time.
- **Share Results with Athletes and Monitor Progress Over Time:** Repeat tests regularly to monitor improvements and adjust training. Even small gains are worth celebrating – they show that the athlete is building fitness and gaining confidence.
- **Focus Beyond the Numbers:** Fitness testing can also be a great way to recognize and encourage:
 - Effort and participation
 - Overcoming anxiety or trying something new
 - Learning the correct technique or how to complete a test
- **Create Your Own Team Benchmarks:** Consider building your own team-based benchmarks. Tracking average scores over time gives your group a customized sense of progress and helps guide program planning.
- **Educate Athletes & Supporters:** Help athletes and their supporters understand how improved fitness supports their sport goals – whether it's building strength to throw farther or increasing endurance to stay active longer during competition.
- **Consult Experts When Needed:** For guidance on interpreting results, setting safe training plans, or tailoring fitness activities to your athletes' needs, consult with:
 - Special Olympics Fitness Coach: a certified fitness or health professional trained to work with Special Olympics athletes
 - Your Special Olympics Program staff. They may be able to connect you with a FUNfitness Clinical Director who can provide additional support
 - Sport-specific resources from [Special Olympics](#) or your sport's governing body

Fitness Testing in Context: The Whole Athlete Approach

Fitness testing should never be viewed in isolation. An athlete's physical fitness, physical activity levels, fundamental motor skills, and understanding of movement are all interconnected—and each element plays a role in their overall development. These pieces work together to support positive health, skill development, and lifelong participation in sport and daily life.

