

YMCA Bench Step Test for Cardiovascular Fitness

Testing for cardiovascular fitness can be costly, time consuming, and also require elaborate equipment. Luckily there is an easy Do-It-Yourself assessment that can easily be completed at home.

The YMCA 3-minute Bench Step Test is based on how quickly your heart rate recovers following a short bout of exercise.

Below are the essentials to perform the test on your own:

- 12-inch tall step, bench, or box (as close to 12 inches as you can find)
- Stopwatch, timer, or clock with a secondhand
- Metronome (free – www.metronomeonline.com)
- Heart rate monitor (optional)
- Partner to assist with cadence and form (optional)

Procedures:

1. Set the metronome to 96 beats per minute and turn the volume up loud enough that you can hear each beat.
2. Stand facing your step.
3. When ready to begin start the stopwatch or timer and begin stepping on and off the step to the metronome beat following a cadence of up, up, down, down.
4. Continue for 3 minutes.
5. As soon as you reach 3 minutes, stop immediately and sit down on your step.
6. Perform a manual pulse reading and count the number of beats for an entire **60 seconds** - <http://www.webmd.com/heart/taking-a-pulse-heart-rate> - If wearing a heart rate monitor record your heart rate 1 minute from when you sit down.
7. Record your pulse when you have reached 1 minute and then locate your score on the rating scale below.

Results: Age-adjusted standards based on guidelines published by [YMCA](#).

Ratings for Women, Based on Age

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+
Excellent	52-81	58-80	51-84	63-91	60-92	70-92
Good	85-93	85-92	89-96	95-101	97-103	96-101
Above Average	96-102	95-101	100-104	104-110	106-111	104-111
Average	104-110	104-110	107-112	113-118	113-118	116-121
Below Average	113-120	113-119	115-120	120-124	119-127	123-126
Poor	122-131	122-129	124-132	126-132	129-135	128-133
Very Poor	135-169	134-171	137-169	137-171	141-174	135-155

Ratings for Men, Based on Age

	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+
Excellent	50-76	51-76	49-76	56-82	60-77	59-81
Good	79-84	79-85	80-88	87-93	86-94	87-92
Above Average	88-93	88-94	92-88	95-101	97-100	94-102
Average	95-100	96-102	100-105	103-111	103-109	104-110
Below Average	102-107	104-110	108-113	113-119	111-117	114-118
Poor	111-119	114-121	116-124	121-126	119-128	121-126
Very Poor	124-157	126-161	130-163	131-159	131-154	130-151