

The purpose of the Step Test is to measure the heart rate in the recovery period following three minutes of stepping.

A 3-minute step test was first developed during World War II at the Harvard University Fatigue Laboratory. The primary appeal of the step test remains its ability to test many individuals on site without the use of extensive equipment and can easily be incorporated in to health fair.

This test is designed to measure cardiovascular endurance.

How is the test conducted?

- Using a 12 inch high step, individual steps on and off for 3 minutes (a rate of 22 steps per minute for females and at 24 steps per minute for males) trying to maintain a steady four beat cycle (using metronome) to go at a steady and consistent pace.
- Trainer helps to keep the required pace using a metronome and voice prompts.
- The athlete immediately sits down on completion of the test, and the total number of heart beats (pulse) are counted between 1 to 1.5 minutes after finishing, between 2 to 2.5 minutes, and between 3 to 3.5 minutes of recovery.
- Level of fitness is calculated. Scores are compared with charts, recommendations are made.
- Equipment used: 12-16 inches step, stopwatch, metronome or cadence tape, heart rate monitor, sphygmomanometer optional.
- Staffed by an exercise physiologist

What are the benefits of testing?

The results from tests can be used to:

- indicate weaknesses
- place the athlete in an appropriate training group
- motivate the athlete
 - Not only is exercise used in prevention but also in as an integral part of the treatment of a wide range of cardiovascular, pulmonary, digestive, urinary, metabolic (e.g. obesity, diabetes, blood lipid abnormalities), back pain, osteoporosis, cancer, immune disorders, infection, osteoarthritis, recovery from surgery or trauma and psychological problems (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression & drug abuse).
 - While the benefits of regular exercise have been well documented, promoting physical activity is not an easy task.

