

Walk Test

⇒ *Alternative*

Another alternative to the PACER test is the one-mile walk test. This test is intended for students age 13 and older since it hasn't been validated with younger samples.

The walk test is an excellent alternative test since it is an assessment that can most definitely be used for a lifetime. Secondary students should learn to do this assessment since it is one that they can repeat on their own to self-assess their fitness levels.

Test Objective

To walk 1 mile as quickly as possible while maintaining a constant walking pace the entire distance. This test is included in *FITNESSGRAM* for use with participants ages 13 years and older. The walk test is an excellent self-assessment skill for everyone to use throughout life.



PHOTO 5.2 Student walking.

Equipment and Facilities

A flat, measured running course, two or more stopwatches, pencils, and score sheets (included in appendix B) are required. Heart rate monitors, if available, make heart rate monitoring much easier. The course may be measured using a tape measure or cross country wheel. Caution: If the track is metric or shorter than 440 yards, adjust the course (1,609.34 meters = 1 mile; 400 meters = 437.4 yards; 1,760 yards = 1 mile). On a 400-meter track the walk should be four laps plus 10 yards.

Test Instructions

Students begin on the signal "Ready, Start." Participants should attempt to walk the full mile as quickly as they can but at a pace that can be maintained the entire distance (photo 5.2). As they cross the finish line, elapsed time should be called to the participants (or their partners). It is possible to test 15 to 30 students at one time by dividing the group. Have each student select a partner; one is the walker and one is the scorer. While one group walks, the scorers count laps and record the finish time. Appendix B contains a sample score sheet for scorers to use.

At the conclusion of the one-mile walk, each student should take a 15-second heart rate count. The scorer can time the 15 seconds or a pace clock with a second hand can be used to allow students to count the time themselves. If using heart rate monitors to determine the heart rate, each participant should start his or her stopwatch at the beginning of the walk and stop it at the end. The last heart rate recorded during the walk should be used as the walking heart rate. The relative heart rate to walk a mile at a specific speed is used to estimate overall cardiovascular fitness.

Scoring

The walk test is scored in minutes and seconds. A score of 99 minutes and 99 seconds indicates that the student could not finish the distance. A 15-second heart rate should be taken at the conclusion of the walk. Walk time and 15-second heart rate are entered in the *FITNESSGRAM* software. Estimated VO_{2max} is calculated using the Rockport Fitness Walking Test equation (Kline et al., 1987; McSwegin et al., 1998).



(continued)

Suggestions for Test Administration

- Preparation for the test should include instruction and practice in pacing and in techniques for heart rate monitoring.
- Results are generally better if the student can maintain a constant pace during most of the test.
- Students should always warm up before taking the test. It is also important that students cool down by continuing to walk for several minutes after completing the distance.
- Administration of the test under conditions of unusually high temperature or humidity or when the wind is strong should be avoided, as these elements may cause an invalid estimate of aerobic capacity.