

# PUSH-UP ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

**Objective:** To measure upper-body endurance

**Equipment:**

- ▶ Mat (optional)
- ▶ Towel or foam block

**Pre-assessment procedure:**

- ▶ After explaining the purpose of the assessment, explain and demonstrate the correct push-up version (standard or modified).
- ▶ The hands should point forward and be positioned shoulder-width apart, directly under the shoulders. The hips and shoulders should be aligned (i.e., rigid trunk) and the head should remain in a neutral to slightly extended position.
- ▶ The goal of the assessment is to perform as many consecutive and complete push-ups as possible before reaching a point of fatigue. The push-ups must be steady, without any rest in between the repetitions. Explain that only correctly performed push-ups are counted.
- ▶ Encourage the client to perform a few practice trials before the assessment begins.

**Assessment protocol and administration:**

- ▶ The assessment starts in the “down” position and the client can begin the assessment whenever he or she is ready.
- ▶ Count each complete push-up until the client reaches fatigue. A complete push-up requires:
  - Full elbow extension with a straight back and rigid torso in the “up” position
  - The chest touching the personal trainer’s fist, a rolled towel, or a foam block, without resting the stomach or body on the mat in the “down” position
- ▶ The assessment is terminated when the client is unable to complete a repetition or fails to maintain proper technique for two consecutive repetitions.
- ▶ Record the score on the assessment form.
- ▶ Classify the client’s score using the table below. Note that categories are based on the performance of standard push-ups for men and modified push-ups for women.

Clients who are physically inactive or unaccustomed to working the upper body are likely lacking in upper-body strength and endurance. If the muscles of the upper body are weak, this can lead to poor posture and a variety of musculoskeletal problems.

## Converting the Push-up Score (Number) to a Health Benefit Rating

Category	Age (years)											
	15–19		20–29		30–39		40–49		50–59		60–69	
Sex	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Excellent	≥39	≥33	≥36	≥30	≥30	≥27	≥25	≥24	≥21	≥21	≥18	≥17
Very good	29–38	25–32	29–35	21–29	22–29	20–26	17–24	15–23	13–20	11–20	11–17	12–16
Good	23–28	18–24	22–28	15–20	17–21	13–19	13–16	11–14	10–12	7–10	8–10	5–11
Fair	18–22	12–17	17–21	10–14	12–16	8–12	10–12	5–10	7–9	2–6	5–7	2–4
Needs improvement	≤17	≤11	≤16	≤9	≤11	≤7	≤9	≤4	≤6	≤1	≤4	≤1

Note: M = Men; W = Women

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