



Often referred to as the father of sports medicine, Dr. Hans Kraus helped President Dwight Eisenhower develop the President's Council on Physical Fitness. In the **1950's** he warned Americans that children were not getting enough exercise and were watching too much television. ***Imagine what he would think about the amount of screen time everyone has today, adults included!*** At the time he campaigned for better physical exercise programs for children, and authored several books on exercise, sports medicine, and physical therapy. Kraus also continued to develop a unique approach to treating back pain in collaboration with another doctor, Sonja Weber. They developed an understanding of the underlying causes of back pain and devised the Kraus-Weber test (also called K-W test) and exercises to alleviate it. Historians have learned that he served as President John Kennedy's back specialist. Kraus's widow donated Kraus's White House medical records on Kennedy to the Kennedy Library. They are now available to historians as well as the general public. They show that by the time of Kennedy's death in Dallas, Kraus's therapy had nearly cured Kennedy of his lifelong back pain

The Kraus-Weber Fitness Test is a program featuring six exercises to evaluate the strength and fitness of key muscles related to spine health. Kraus-Weber's tests aren't meant to build strength but to determine whether or not an individual has the acceptable minimum core muscle strength and flexibility. Being unable to perform even one of the six exercises qualifies as failing the test. Some recent studies have proved the validity of these simple tests, so we thought we would share them with you to try. You will need a helper, so it could be fun for the whole family!

Test One



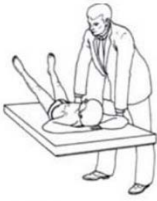
The first Kraus-Weber exercise calls for the completion of one simple sit-up. Assume a standard sit-up position with your back flat on the floor, your knees bent and your feet planted. Have a friend kneel on your feet to keep them anchored to the floor. Now, with your hands clasped behind your head, sit up, using only your core muscles.

Test Two



The second Kraus-Weber exercise involves a variation of the first, this time performing a sit-up with legs extended and not bent. Someone should hold your legs down to provide support. Again, with your hands clasped behind your head, use your back and core muscles to roll into a sit-up. Performing the exercise with straight legs lessens the involvement of the hip flexors and places more emphasis on the abdominals.

Test Three



The third Kraus-Weber exercise tests the hip flexors and also your abs. Lay on your back and raise your feet eight inches off the ground. Hold the position for 10 seconds. Inability to keep your feet elevated or having to significantly arch your back to sustain elevation amounts to failing the test.

Test Four



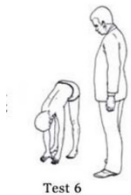
Lie on your stomach with your hands clasped behind your head and a pillow positioned beneath your lower abs and pelvis. Have your friend or examiner press down on your feet and pelvis to stabilize you. Now raise your head, chest and shoulders off the ground. Hold the position for 10 seconds. This exercise tests the muscles of the upper back.

Test Five



Remain in the same position as the previous exercise, except this time have a friend press down on your upper back and shoulders to pin your chest to the floor. With your feet together, lift your legs off the ground and hold the position for 10 seconds. This exercise targets the muscles of the lower back.

Test Six



Stand tall, feet together with your arms at your sides. With a friend holding your knees straight, bend forward to touch the floor. Remain in contact with the ground for at least three seconds. This exercise tests overall flexibility, especially in the muscles of the back.

If you are able to do all of these without any trouble, good for you, your back and ab strength isn't too bad. If you failed a few, or struggled with all of these you might benefit from seeing one of our experts to build a program you can do to help improve your core strength and flexibility. [Call one of our locations today](#) and get going in the right direction!