



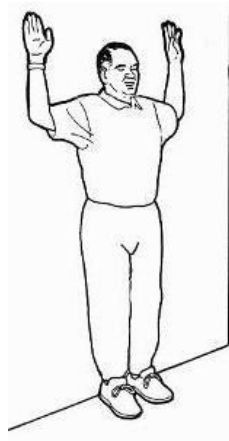
Flexibility and mobility are things we assess and treat all the time as Physical Therapists. Having full mobility is something many people take for granted and as we age, or if we have had prior injuries, it is something that gets overlooked and in the future can be a cause of future injuries. Because tightness in the upper back, neck, shoulders hips and legs are often related to muscle pain and stiffness, testing flexibility may help determine your risk for future pain and injury. Here are a few simple tests you can do at home to see how your mobility stacks up.

The Reach Test



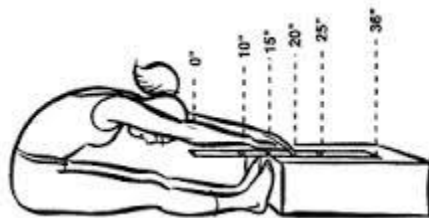
- To test your left shoulder flexibility, raise your right arm straight up overhead.
 - Bend your right elbow and let your right palm rest on the back of your neck and slide it down your back and between your shoulder blades.
 - Reach behind you with your left hand so the back of your hand rests on the middle of your back.
 - Now slide your right hand down and your left hand up to try to touch the fingers of both hands.
 - Measure the minimum distance between the fingertips of the right and left hand. Record any overlap as well.
 - Switch your hands to perform the test on the opposite shoulder.
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- **Excellent = Fingers overlap**
 - **Good = Fingers touch**
 - **Average = Fingers are less than two inches apart**
 - **Poor = Fingers are more than two inches apart**

The Wall Posture Test



- Set up with your back against the wall, and your heels four inches away from the wall.
- Make sure your lower back is flat against the wall, and make a double chin while keeping the back of your head against the wall.
- Place your arms and elbows against the wall and slowly try to slide them up the wall, without breaking contact.
 - **If you can't keep your arms in contact with the wall the entire way overhead without moving your head into a forward posture, arching your back, or moving your feet away from the wall, then you have failed!**
 - **Also if you experience any neck or shoulder pain during the test is a "fail," too.**

Sit and Reach Test



- Sit on the floor upright with your legs stretched out in front of you. This test is actually performed *without* shoes. You want to have 12 inches between your feet, and have a measuring tape in between your legs with the 15" mark in line with your heels. Now place your hands on top of one another, reach to see what number you can reach to! You get three trials to do this and your score is the highest of the three and remember to date it! That is your flexibility test. See the chart for Sit and Reach Norms on the next page:

Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Excellent	>24	>23	>22	>21	>20
Good	22-23	21-22	20-21	19-20	18-19
Average	16-21	15-20	14-19	13-18	12-17
Fair	13-15	12-14	11-13	10-12	9-11
Poor	<12	<11	<10	<9	<8

Hip Flexor Test



- Sit at the end of a bench (or end of your bed), hold one knee to your chest and then lie back, letting the other leg hang naturally off the end of the bed
- Make sure your low back is flat against the bed and your head is in a relaxed position.
- Now note the angle of the leg that is “hanging” off the end of the bench.
 - **Excellent = Leg hangs below the surface of the bench**
 - **Good = Leg hangs right at the level of the bench**
 - **Average = Leg doesn’t reach the bench and hangs a an inch or two above it**
 - **Poor = Leg doesn’t hang at all and instead is at a significant distance from the bench**

If you have failed one, or more of these tests, using these tests as a simple stretching program can help you improve your mobility and hopefully help prevent future pain or injury. If you have severe limitations, it may be time to see the experts at Blue Hills Sports & Spine Rehabilitation.