



What's your cholesterol? What's your blood pressure? What's your weight? What's your blood sugar?

These are important questions. As doctors, we're used to asking them. Numbers have changed the practice of medicine, and numbers save lives when we pay attention to their message.

Research indicates that the number which may be the most important of all, in terms of both quality of life and length of days, is not on the list. Amazingly, we don't have a number to put on fitness.

In conjunction with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Kansas Medical Society, and the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians-- we're going to try to change that.

We can **calculate** your fitness, and therefore your risk of premature death, by knowing how fast you can walk one mile-- plus your age, sex, weight, and your heart rate at the finish. We can **approximate** your risk by simply knowing how fast you can walk one mile. Simply by testing yourself every year, you can discover whether you are maintaining your vitality, or sliding down that slippery slope into a recliner in front of the hi-def TV.

Are you up for the challenge? The first step is a short questionnaire to see if you can safely self-administer the walking test.

#### Safety Questionnaire

*If the answer to any of these questions is "yes" you should consult your personal physician before attempted the timed one-mile walk.*

1. Do you have a heart disease, circulation disorder, or lung disease that has been diagnosed by a doctor?
2. Do you ever experience chest pain or breathlessness while resting?
3. Do you ever experience chest pain or breathlessness while walking at a normal pace?
4. Has a doctor ever stated that your blood pressure was permanently increased (do you suffer from "hypertension")?
5. Do you often feel faint or have dizzy spells?
6. Do you have back pain or are your joints painful, inflamed, or swollen?
7. Have you had any infectious disease during the last two weeks?
8. Do you suffer from any other medical condition for which a doctor has advised caution with regard to exercise?

#### The What's Your Mile Walk Test

1. Find a local one-mile course. It could be 4 laps around a school track, or a path around your neighborhood. You can plot this using your car's odometer, or online at [walkjogrun.net](http://walkjogrun.net). Or you can participate in a local race or fundraiser which is **What's Your Mile** qualified. **Do NOT use a treadmill-- it will determine your speed, and you won't get an accurate measure of performance.**

2. Walk one mile as fast as possible at a steady pace, without risking your health. Record the time below. Record the time below. You must not run or jog-- one foot must be in contact with the ground at all times. You should not walk with a friend or talk, because you should be working too hard to talk, and a friend will hold you back. **This is a test!**

3. For added precision, record your heart rate as you finish. If you can count your pulse, multiply the beats in 10 seconds by 6 and record the result below. Better still, use a monitoring device.

**Time:** \_\_\_min \_\_\_sec **Heart Rate:** \_\_\_ **Year:** 200\_\_

#### How Did I Do?

1. Go to the **What's Your Mile?** section of the Healthy Kansas website and enter your time, heart rate, sex, age, and weight: [www.healthykansas.org](http://www.healthykansas.org)

2. If you are in the **moderate risk** category, you are fit enough to have gained significant benefit from your daily exercise level.

3. If you are in the **low risk** category, you're doing great. Keep trying to walk faster if you are motivated. You can't be too fit.

4. Having trouble figuring your heart rate? Can't use a computer? If you can walk a mile in **14** minutes, you're in great shape. If you can do it in **18** minutes, you're probably doing pretty well, but you have room to improve.

5. Don't like walking? Try biking 3 miles, running 1.5 miles, or swimming half a mile. Those are roughly equivalent, in time and energy, to a one-mile walk.