

Fitter than a Fifth-Grader? Adults Can Take Fitness Cues from PE Standards

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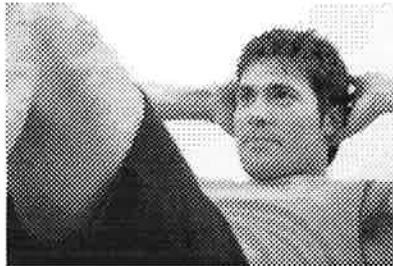
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Long division? Check. With fractions? Check (ish). Book report? Check. Year of the Boston Tea Party? Check. Maybe you're smarter than the average fifth grader, but can you pass a fifth-grade fitness test?

California, and many other states, requires students to take a physical education test in fifth grade to demonstrate body strength, flexibility, and endurance. These include curl-ups (sit-ups), push-ups, trunk lifts, a one-mile run, stretches, modified pull-ups, and flexed arm hangs.



Can you pass the test? The Fitnessgram Healthy Fitness Zones performance goals were designed to "represent minimum levels of fitness that offer protection against diseases that result from sedentary living." In general, by age 17, boys are expected to do about twice as many curl-ups, push-ups, modified pull-ups, and arm hangs as girls.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	(Males)
Curl-Ups	10-11	7-15	7-20
	17+	18-35	24-47
Flexed Arm Hang	10-11	4-12 seconds	4-13 seconds
	17+	8-12 seconds	15-20 seconds
Modified Pull-Ups	10-11	4-13	5-17
	17+	4-13	14-30
Push-Ups	10-11	7-15	7-20
	17+	7-15	18-35
Trunk Lifts	10-11	9-12 inches	9-12 inches
	17+	9-12 inches	9-12 inches
1-Mile Run	10-11	9-12.5 minutes	8.5-11.5minutes
	17+	8-10 minutes	7-8.5minutes

[Activity Descriptions](#)

Curl-Ups: Feet flat on floor with knees bent and arms at sides, palms down. Using abdominal muscles, raise upper body until hands slide forward about 4.5 inches past their starting point, then slowly release to flat position. Lower back stays on the mat. Repeat every 3 seconds until form fails.

Flexed Arm Hang: Grasp the bar with an overhand grip (palms facing outward); with the assistance of 1 or more spotters, raise the body up to a position in which the chin is above the bar with elbows flexed and tucked into sides. Body is straight. Time how many seconds form can be maintained.

Modified Pull-Ups: Pull-up bar is a few inches above student's reach. Student lies on back with shoulders under bar. Bar is grasped in overhand grip with hands shoulder-width apart; body is straight with only heels in contact with floor. Pull up until top of head is a few inches below the pull-up bar. Perform as many as possible in good form.

Push-Ups: Lying face down; arms are placed shoulder width or slightly wider. Student pushes up with legs and body straight. Perform one push-up every 3 seconds. Back should be straight and arms should fully extend in up position.

Trunk Lifts: Lie face down on mat with hands at sides. Using back muscles, lift trunk and head, without using arms, to a maximum of 12 inches off the ground (measured from the top of the head to mat with a ruler).

1-Mile Run: Flat, even surface. Time start and finish times. Students should keep run pace throughout.

Failed? Don't be discouraged. Endurance takes time. Start with the number of repetitions in good form that you can master; add just one extra each day. Push-ups can be especially challenging for women but are great for building upper body strength and endurance. If standard push-ups are too challenging, start with a modified or bench push-up. You can even begin with a wall push-up until you build enough strength for a bench push-up. Practice each day. If you do so for each category, you will be fitter than a 5th grader before you know it.

Not intended for health/medical advice. Always check with your healthcare provider before beginning any new diet or exercise regime.

- Pia Hinckle