

Know Your Numbers

A 10-Minute Aging Self-Check

The stiffness, the slower stairs, the muscle that quietly disappears — a lot of what we call "normal aging" isn't as inevitable as it seems. Research increasingly points to a simple idea: your ability to move well — to walk, lift, balance, and stay independent — is one of the strongest predictors of how well you'll actually live in the decades ahead.

Here are four quick, at-home checks that give you a real snapshot of where you stand today. No equipment beyond what you probably already have, no gym required, about 10 minutes total.

A note before you start: these are simplified, informal self-checks meant for motivation and awareness — not medical assessments. If you have a health condition, injury, or any concern, check with your doctor before trying a new movement or test.

Test 1: Sit-to-Rise

What it measures

Overall mobility, balance, and leg and core strength — specifically, how well you can get down to the floor and back up without help.

How to do it

1. Find a clear space on the floor and wear comfortable clothing.
2. From standing, lower yourself into a seated position on the floor, using as little support from your hands, knees, or forearms as possible.
3. Once seated, stand back up again, again using as little support as possible.
4. Count your total points of support used (each hand, knee, or forearm touch counts as one point).

Points of Support	What It Suggests
0–1	Excellent mobility and control
2–3	Good, with room to build
4+ or unable to complete	Start with gentle mobility work, and check with your doctor before more challenging movement

Test 2: Grip Strength (Dead Hang)

What it measures

Grip strength is one of the most studied proxies for overall strength, and researchers have repeatedly linked it to healthy, independent aging.

How to do it

1. Find a sturdy bar, pull-up bar, or secure ledge you can hang from with straight arms.
2. Hang with both hands, feet off the ground, for as long as you can hold good form.
3. Time yourself, stopping when your grip gives out.

Hang Time	What It Suggests
Under 10 seconds	A great place to start building
10–30 seconds	Solid foundation

30+ seconds	Strong grip endurance
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Test 3: Push-Up Capacity

What it measures

Upper body strength and muscular endurance.

How to do it

1. From a standard push-up position, or modified on your knees, perform as many push-ups as you can with good form.
2. Stop when your form breaks down or you need to rest — no pausing mid-set.
3. Count your total.

Total Push-Ups	What It Suggests
Under 5	Building phase — a great place to start
5–15	Solid foundation
15+	Strong upper-body endurance

Test 4: Gait Speed (4-Meter Walk)

What it measures

How fast you walk at your normal, comfortable pace. This is one of the most-studied markers in aging research — it's tied closely to long-term health and functional independence.

How to do it

1. Measure a 13-foot (4-meter) stretch of flat, clear hallway or floor.
2. Starting from a standstill, walk the distance at your normal pace — not a fast walk, just your everyday pace.
3. Time how many seconds it takes you, then divide 4 by your time in seconds to get your speed in meters per second (m/s).

Speed	What It Suggests
1.0 m/s or faster	Strongly associated with healthy aging in research
0.6–1.0 m/s	A great area to build on
Under 0.6 m/s	Talk with your doctor about a mobility and strength plan

What Now?

Write your four numbers down somewhere you'll actually see them again. Come back and retest in 8 to 12 weeks — that's enough time for real, visible change if you're moving consistently in between.

Small, consistent movement compounds. These four numbers are just a starting point — but they're a real one.

Julie 

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