

**CONVENTION
SPEAKER**

 See Tommy on Friday 13 April 08:30-09:30
and Saturday 16:05-17:20 visit
www.fitpro.com/convention

Fitness testing

The traditional testing methods used often aren't always the most relevant to our clients. Tommy Matthews examines which tests are useful to our clients' goals.



The majority of clients don't like tests; they show up their weaknesses and uncover how unfit they really are, but testing is an important part of any client's training programme. We need to track our clients' goals and rate of development, and the only real way of doing this is by coming up with applicable tests that relate to what they want to achieve.

Strength testing

There are plenty of relative tests that are both simple and effective. The deadlift or back squat are both big, fundamental, compound movements that tell us a lot about our overall strength but there is no point doing these types of tests with a client who is new to movement. So, what would you do if they are not ready for this? Would you put them on a fixed machine like a seated leg press? Hopefully not, as a movement like this has almost no crossover to function or strength in the real world and is more applicable for athletes. Get your client moving well and develop their motor patterns and, when they are ready to be loaded, then it's time to test.

A test for general strength which can be easy to measure is a push-up test. This will firstly be testing to see if they can maintain good form and a full range of motion. Then it will look at how many repetitions they can complete.

Cardiovascular testing

Standard tests for CV function include the bleep test or a lung function test. However, the beep test is only really applicable for those with a very high level of cardiovascular fitness. A far more valuable test for the majority of clients would be a 2k row test. It's easy to judge, easy to see improvement and clearly crosses over to improved CV function.

Flexibility or range of motion

Firstly, let's clear up what we're testing here. Flexibility of a specific muscle has almost no crossover to functional movement compared to that of a range of motion test. So the traditional sit and reach test is far less valuable compared with an overhead squat or overhead

lunge. These movements will tell us so much more about our overall function, joint mobility and myofascial tightness. By assessing an overhead squat, we can gain valuable information about what might happen when this client performs another functional movement.

Summary

The tests above offer much more than just analysis of one specific area and combine a host of different aspects of fitness and health. Designing our tests to be specific to our client will mean that we collect usable information about their current level of fitness which we can use as part of their goal setting. **Fit**

TOMMY MATTHEWS

Tommy is MD of the Optimal Life Fitness Group, specialising in kettlebell training and education. He has over five years' experience in educating trainers across Europe using the Extreme Kettlebell educational system.

PT Craig O'Toole on different methods of testing

Before testing a client we need to understand why we are testing, what type of results we want and how we are going to use them. Testing can be split into two basic types: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative tests provide good validity and reliability. These tests provide numerate results and comparative data, allowing you to give feedback to your clients relative to their peer group. This can allow you to pinpoint areas of strength or weakness

while maintaining an evidence-based approach to your practice. The main limitation of these types of tests is often how well they carry over into everyday situations.

Qualitative tests are those in which you make a judgement based on your opinion. Most posture tests and movement screens are subjective but will provide excellent information, if you are skilled enough to interpret the results. If you decide to use these types of tests, then you must use a standardised format and have an extremely clear idea of what comprises good technique and why.

Quantitative

- Cardio-respiratory – Blood pressure, resting heart rate, Cooper test
- Strength – press-ups, bench press, back squat
- Body composition – weight, BMI, calipers
- Range of motion – active and passive single joint

Qualitative

- Static posture – front, side, back, sitting
- Movement screens – functional movement screen, single leg squat, star excursion