



Basic Health Info

Health Inventory

By Chet Zelasko, PhD

Physical Inventory

- Can you sit and stand without assistance? Do you need assistance whether in the form of a walker or arms on the chair? All of those require basic muscular strength and balance.
- Can you walk without assistance? How about with assistance? How far can you walk? I know this sounds so basic, but everyone starts somewhere. How fast you can walk also matters.
- Can you bend over at the waist? Do you lose your balance if you do that? How about squatting? Full squat, half squat, quarter squat, or not at all?
- Can you get on an exercise bike or an elliptical trainer or a treadmill? In order to use them, you have to be able to balance well enough to get on them first. If you've never been on a treadmill, you don't really know whether that's possible for your fitness program or not. Some people have balance issues they never knew existed.
- Can you stand in place with your eyes closed, or do you get dizzy? Can you touch your finger to your nose with your eyes closed while holding your arms horizontal to the floor? This test may be associated with assessing your degree of drunkenness, but you've got to be able to do it sober first.
- Can you raise your arms above your head? Can you bend your arms at the elbow? Can you do a bicep curl with a can of vegetables? Can you lift it above your head?
- Can you usually grip the lid of a sealed jar well enough to open it? Everyone's grip strength deteriorates over time, so it's important to know where you rate.
- Can you get on the floor on your hands and knees? Can you lie face down on the floor? Can you lie face up? Can you get up off the floor without leaning on any piece of furniture?
- Can you walk up a flight of stairs? Can you walk up a single stair and step down again?

Logistics Inventory

- Do you have the time in your schedule, while getting reasonable sleep, to exercise? Early in the day? Lunch? Before dinner? In the evening? Every day? Three days per week? Does it depend on your children's after-school activity schedule?
- What equipment do you have? Do you like it enough to use it? Do you have exercise tubes or bands? Weights like dumbbells or barbells? Do you have mats for floor routines? Do you like exercising while watching videos or do you prefer music?
- Are you a member of a gym or club? Can you get there on a regular basis? Is there enough equipment to do what you like to do? Does it have a pool in case swimming is your thing?
- Do you have the time to prepare meals if eating better is your goal? Do you have a selection of the right tools to cook well? It's easier if you have the right spices, knives, cookware, and cook wear (might as well have a cute apron). Do you have the budget to buy healthier ingredients?
- What are you willing to eat on a regular basis? I've made it clear I'm not drinking smoothies or eating bars, at least, not very much. That means it takes more time for prep and cooking.
- If you're not exercising at home, is your car dependable?
- Do you live in a safe neighborhood to walk or jog?

Dr. Chet Zelasko is dedicated to helping men and women get healthy and fit. As a health and fitness consultant with a PhD in Exercise Physiology and Health Education from Michigan State University, he provides health information based on the most recent research and delivers it in a way that's easy to understand. Whether in person during seminars, in audio recordings, or in the written word, he makes sense out of the health news people hear so they can make better health choices and achieve optimal health. He's conducted research and been published in peer-reviewed journals. He is certified by the American College of Sports Medicine as a Health and Fitness Specialist and has taught in ACSM certification workshops throughout the United States; he also belongs to the American Society of Nutrition. Although Grand Rapids, Michigan, is home, he has presented seminars on health to groups all over North America, Mexico, and the Caribbean and has written extensively on the health benefits of a good diet, regular exercise, and targeted supplementation.

The health information in this Basic Health Info is designed for educational purposes only. It's not a substitute for medical advice from your healthcare provider, and you should not use it to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. It's designed to motivate you to work toward better health, and that includes seeing your healthcare professional regularly. If what you've read raises any questions or concerns about health problems or possible diseases, talk to your healthcare provider today.

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