

Gait Speed Test

Also known as the 4m walk test, the gait speed test assesses an individual's functional mobility. Gait speed has been used as a predictor of decline in functional mobility.

Materials required:

- 2 traffic cones, placed 4m apart
- Measuring tape
- Tape to mark start line
- Stopwatch

Procedure:

- 4 meters is measured over a level surface, with 2 meters for acceleration and 2 meters for deceleration.
- Patient starts from standing wearing outdoor shoes.
- They should walk at their comfortable speed over the entire distance.

Instruction to participant:

“This activity involves walking from one place to another. I want you to walk to the other end of the course at your usual speed, as if you were walking down the street to go to the shops. 3,2,1 Go”.

How to measure:

- The patient should be timed once the first foot passes the start line; the time is stopped once the first foot crosses the finish line.
- Two trials are given, with the average comfortable speed calculated.
- Gait speed is measured by the distance/time to walk that distance (e.g., 4m/___sec)

Cut Points/Scoring:

Low gait speed <0.8m / second

* Select the most appropriate cut point for the population you are working with

Frequently asked questions:

Q: What is a comfortable walking speed?

A: The participants normal or natural walking speed.

Key references:

Cruz-Jentoft AJ, Bahat G, Bauer J, et al. Writing Group for the European Working Group on Sarcopenia in Older People 2 (EWGSOP2), and the Extended Group for EWGSOP2. Sarcopenia: revised European consensus on definition and diagnosis. *Age Ageing*. 2019;48(1):16-31. doi: 10.1093/ageing/afy169. Erratum in: *Age Ageing*. 2019 Jul 1;48(4):601.

Montero-Odasso, M., Schapira, M., Soriano, E. R., Varela, M., Kaplan, R., Camera, L. A., Mayorga, L. M. Gait velocity as a single predictor of adverse events in healthy seniors aged 75 years and older. *Journal of Gerontology: Biological Sciences*. 2005;60:1304-1309.

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