

Routine checkup should assess fitness, too

January 4 2017



(HealthDay)—Most people know they should have their height, weight, blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly, but an exercise expert says cardiorespiratory fitness should also be part of a routine medical

exam.

Cardiorespiratory fitness is a measure of how much work your body can do during exercise.

"This measurement is so important because it shows how the heart, lungs and muscles all work together, and it should be an element of assessment of [heart disease risk](#) along with factors like smoking history, diabetes, and [high [blood pressure](#)]," said Dr. Benjamin Levine. He is a professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center, and director of the Institute of Exercise and Environmental Medicine, which is run by UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources.

"Decades of tests have clearly demonstrated that the ability to do aerobic exercise is strongly correlated with heart health," Levine said in a medical center news release.

Cardiorespiratory fitness is usually measured on a treadmill or a bike. Another way to do it is to time a person as he or she walks or runs two miles, Levine said. Patients can also get a rough sense of their fitness through online calculators.

Levine was part of an American Heart Association group that recently issued a scientific statement calling for physicians to assess [cardiorespiratory fitness](#) as a routine part of patient care, according to the news release.

More information: The American Heart Association has more about [heart health screenings](#).

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Citation: Routine checkup should assess fitness, too (2017, January 4) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-01-routine-checkup.html>

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