



# Senior Fitness Test Manual

By Roberta Rikli, C. Jessie Jones

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**Senior Fitness Test Manual** By Roberta Rikli, C. Jessie Jones

Although physical fitness has traditionally been associated with the young through the middle-aged, it is most critical for those in their senior years. Older adults require adequate strength, flexibility, and endurance to accomplish even ordinary, everyday tasks.

Up until now, most physical fitness tests have been geared to younger audiences. The Senior Fitness Test is an answer to the need for a simple, easy-to-use battery of test items that assess the functional fitness of older adults. The test is safe and enjoyable for older adults, it meets scientific standards for reliability and validity, and it has accompanying performance norms based on actual performance scores of over 7,000 men and women between the ages of 60 and 94.

The *Senior Fitness Test Manual* provides the theoretical base for the test. It also includes the developmental procedures and provides complete information on administering and scoring the test and providing feedback to test participants about their results. It also includes instructions on organizing and testing groups of older adults.

The appendix has reproducible sample forms, charts, tables, and posters for instructors to use in their programs.

**Chapter 1** introduces the test and explains why fitness is important for older adults.

**Chapter 2** establishes the conceptual background for the test, describes how it relates to traditional theories and models describing physical decline in later years, and presents a brief overview of the test items.

**Chapter 3** contains the scientific documentation for the test's validity, reliability, and performance standards.

**Chapter 4** includes a list of procedures and issues that need to be addressed prior to testing, along with sample instruction sheets, forms, and equipment lists to use in planning for the test. Also included are proper warm-up and pretest instructions that should be given to the participants prior to testing and descriptions of the official testing and scoring protocols.

**Chapter 5** explains how to interpret test results and how to use the information to motivate participants to increase their activity levels and improve their performances.

The Senior Fitness Test helps professionals not only motivate older adults, but also assess the major physiological components of functional capacity so that emerging weaknesses can be detected and treated before causing serious functional limitations.

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**Roberta E. Rikli**, PhD, is professor and chair of the division of kinesiology and health promotion at California State University in Fullerton and is cofounder of the LifeSpan Wellness Program at Fullerton.

For the past 20 years, Dr. Rikli has done extensive work in physical performance assessment with a particular focus on senior fitness. She has published numerous scientific papers on her work and has made over 100 presentations at conferences and workshops in the United States, Germany, France, Finland, China, and Japan. She serves on the editorial boards of three scientific journals and is a regular reviewer for several others.

She holds professional memberships in numerous organizations including the International Society for Aging and Physical Activity; the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD); the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM); and the American Academy for Kinesiology and Physical Education.

Dr. Rikli lives in Orange, California, and enjoys hiking and playing tennis and golf.

**C. Jessie Jones**, PhD, is a professor of the division of kinesiology and health promotion at California State University in Fullerton and is codirector of the Center for Successful Aging at Fullerton.

Dr. Jones is internationally known for her research, program design, curriculum development, and instructor training in the field of exercise science and aging. She has taught senior fitness classes and conducted training workshops for senior fitness instructors for over 15 years. Her work has been covered in numerous publications and presented at conferences worldwide.

Her professional memberships include the Gerontological Society of America; the California Council for Gerontology and Geriatrics; the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD); and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

Dr. Jones also lives in Orange, California, where she enjoys hiking, playing golf, and dancing.

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