

## FLEXIBILITY TESTING WITH FLEX-TESTER BOX

### Supplies

- Flex-Tester Box

### Definition

*Flexibility* is necessary for normal activities that require bending, twisting, and reaching. Maintaining a range of motion allows us to do everyday tasks without experiencing pain or discomfort. Flexibility is increased through careful stretching of the muscles. Flexible muscles relieve stress, promote good posture, reduce the risk of pain and injury, and allow ease of movement throughout life. Also, good flexibility reduces the risk of low back pain, which, for many people, is enough reason to maintain muscle flexibility.

*The Flex-Tester* is specifically designed to evaluate the flexibility of a selected set of joints and muscles, including the lower back vertebrae, larger hamstring muscles, and hip flexor joints, all of which must work together effectively to provide optimum flexibility.

### Purpose

Many people, young and old, suffer with problems resulting from poor flexibility. The most common problems are low back pain, chronic pain in joints and restricted movement due to inflammation of joints or lack of muscle and tendon elasticity. Early detection of limited flexibility permits development of effective preventative programs. For this reason, many health screening and fitness programs test flexibility.

### Procedures

1. Prior to administering the test, familiarize yourself with the Cooper Institute Flexibility tables on the side of the Flex-Tester box, which use Scale 2 on the top of the box.
2. Participants should warm up prior to taking the test if possible.
3. Since natural flexibility is being tested, do not push on shoulders or hyper-flex legs of participants to increase flexibility.
4. Instruct participants to:
  - a. Remove shoes.
  - b. Place feet squarely against the box with feet no wider than eight inches apart, toes pointed toward the ceiling.
  - c. Keep knees extended throughout the test.
  - d. Place hands on top of one another, palms down, fingertips matching, touching the maximum reach indicator. Fingertips should remain even; none should ever extend beyond another during the test.
  - e. Push the finger-plate, sliding it forward along the top of the unit as far as possible, exhaling on the reach and relaxing the neck.
5. Ensure that no lunging, bobbing, or forced assistance occurs during the test.
6. The stretch must be held for one second.
7. Allow three trials.
8. Note the best reach of three trials to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and record the corresponding Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Very Poor on participant's handout.