

VO₂ Max Testing

At UW Medicine Sports Medicine Center

This handout explains VO₂ max testing, a type of exercise stress test for athletes.

What is VO₂ max?

VO₂ max is the maximum volume of oxygen your body can use during exercise.

What is VO₂ max testing?

VO₂ max testing, also called *cardiopulmonary exercise testing* (CPET) is an exercise stress test. It involves intense (“all out”) effort while exercising. During the test, we slowly increase the speed and intensity of your exercise.

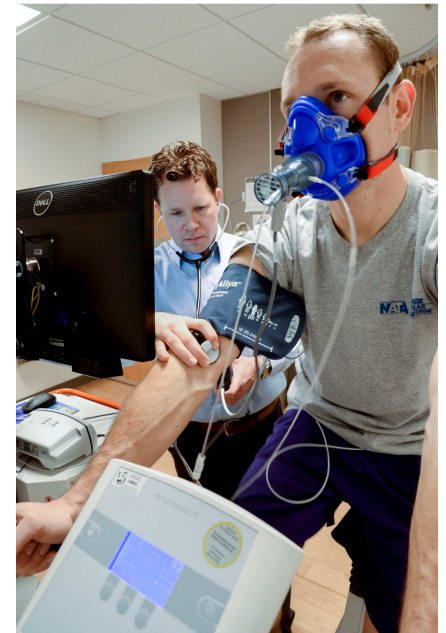
The test takes about 10 to 15 minutes. The results show your fitness level and *aerobic endurance* (how long you can exercise without getting tired).

How can VO₂ max testing help me?

VO₂ max test results will show your:

- *Maximum heart rate* – the number of times your heart beats per minute when it is working the hardest
- *Anaerobic threshold* – the point during exercise when lactic acid starts to gather in your muscles (when your heart beats at about 80% to 90% of your maximum heart rate)
- *Aerobic threshold* – the level of effort you can exert without reaching your anaerobic threshold

These results can help you know which heart rate zones to use for training. This can help you meet your goals and improve your performance.



Your VO₂ max test will use exercise equipment that best mimics your sport.

How is the test done?

The test measures your maximum rate of oxygen use while you are exercising intensely. You will wear a mask that measures and analyzes your oxygen use.

You will use equipment that best mimics your sport. This gives us the best results. For example:

- Runners test on an electronic treadmill
- Cyclists use a bike that can be fit with their own seat and pedals
- Rowers test on a rowing ergometer.

Is this test only for people who are already active?

VO₂ max testing is for athletes of all fitness levels and abilities. It can help those just starting out and those who are at the top of their game.

VO₂ max testing can also help get your exercise program started. People wanting to start an exercise program know that exercise has great benefits for general health, weight loss, and treatment of many diseases. Our testing can help you know if you are ready to exercise. It can also help you plan your exercise program.

Always talk with your doctor before you start an exercise program.

Who will do the testing?

Tests are done by our highly trained sports medicine physicians. These doctors are also team doctors for the University of Washington (UW) Huskies and the Seattle Seahawks.

Your sports medicine doctor will do the test, interpret the results, and explain how to use the results to plan your exercise program.

Where is the testing done?

VO₂ max testing is done at UW Medicine Sports Medicine Center in Husky Stadium. The center is on the UW campus at 3800 Montlake Blvd. N.E., Seattle, WA 98195.

How do I set up an appointment?

To set up your appointment, please call 206.598.3294 and press 8.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UW Medicine Sports
Medicine Center: Call
206.598.DAWG (3294) and
press 8.