

PLANK 4 POINT HOLD TEST

The plank test is a measure of muscular endurance specifically for the core muscles (rectus abdominis, transverse abdominis, internal and external obliques, spine erector muscles and scapula stabilisers). Muscular endurance is classified by the length of time the 4 point plank can be held for with correct technique. The test should follow these procedures:

- The client should be in a prone position with forearms flat on the floor. With elbows directly under the shoulders at 90 degrees flexion, the clients should lift their chest, stomach and legs off the floor maintaining balance between their forearms and toes.
- Once in this position the trainer should start timing. The client should maintain a straight line from their shoulders, across their back and down to the feet, with the head facing down throughout.
- Timing should cease when the clients technique fails i.e. starts to arch their lower back or can no longer hold the plank position and drops knees to the floor. The trainer should record this time and use the data below to categorise the result.

Please note there is no specific normative data results for the plank hold, the trainer can simply use the time to monitor goal development i.e. see as the clients program progresses the plank hold time progresses, or use the two recommended analysing methods below:

Plank Hold Time Classification

	Male	Female
Excellent	>4.01 min	>4.01 min
Good	2.01 – 4.00 min	2.01 – 4.00 min
Above Average	1.01 – 2.00 min	1.01 – 2.00 min
Average	30 sec – 1 min	30 sec – 1 min
Below Average	11 – 29 sec	11 – 29 sec
Poor	Can't Hold Position – 10 sec	

Reason for Plank Hold Failure

The trainer can record the time and the reason why the test ended using the following categories:

- a. Increase dipping of the lower spine
- b. Adverse shaking or signs of fatigue
- c. Shoulder dipping

Form this the trainer can identify areas of weakness and incorporate them into the training program to develop these areas. Reassessment can then take place later in the program to hopefully see improvement.

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