

This simple sitting test could predict how long you will live

If you have trouble performing this test, your life could be cut short.

It's a question we often ponder, especially as we age: How many years do I have left? Well, thanks to Brazilian physician Claudio Gil Araujo, there's now a simple test you can perform right at home, in just a few seconds, that could predict [how many years](#) you have left to live, [according to Discover](#).

Araujo came up with the test after noticing that many of his patients, especially older ones, often have difficulty with simple feats of balance and strength, such as picking up something off the floor or getting up out of a chair. Since balance and conditioning problems are known to increase the risk of dangerous falls and accidents (and can also harm cardiovascular health), he wondered if a patient's flexibility, balance and strength could be used as a measure of life expectancy.

His idea was that patients might be more motivated to get in better shape if they had a more tangible way of conceptualizing how their overall health was being affected by their conditioning. If a patient is simply told to get in shape, they're not likely to change their behavior. But if they're told "if you don't get into better shape, you could be dead in five years," they're apt to take notice.

Of course, the test also needed to be simple. If it required expensive equipment or measuring devices, the test probably wouldn't be accessible to many people. So Araujo and colleagues developed the sitting-rise test, or SRT. It requires no equipment whatsoever and can be performed in seconds.

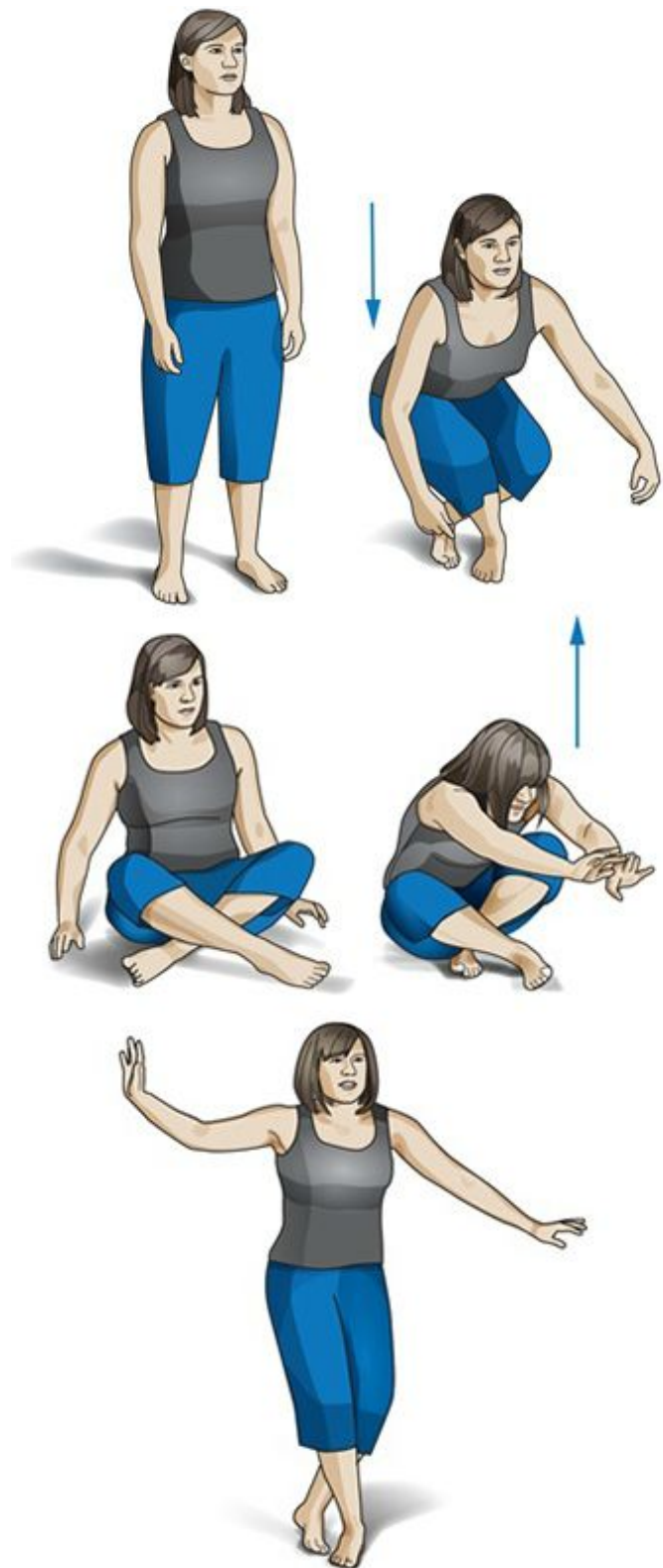
In fact, you can grab a friend try the test out yourself right now. A simple

illustration (at right), [provided by Discover](#), can help you to visualize the steps. It's recommended that you wear loose or comfortable clothing.

Begin by standing upright in the middle of a room. Without using your arms or hands for leverage, carefully squat into a cross-legged sitting position. Once you're comfortable, attempt to stand back up from the sitting position — again, without using your arms for help.

The test is scored on a point scale between 1 and 10 (5 points for sitting, 5 more points for standing back up). Each time you use an arm or knee for help in balancing during the test, you subtract one point from 10 possible points. Half a point is subtracted each time you lose balance, or when the fluidity of the feat becomes clumsy.

It seems like a pretty rudimentary test of conditioning, but Araujo found that it could predict life expectancy with alarming accuracy. He tested it on more than 2,000 of his patients aged 51 to 80, and found that people who scored less than 8 points on the test were twice as likely to die within the next six years. Those who scored three points or less were *five times* more likely to die within that same time period. Overall, each point achieved in the test accounted for a 21-percent decrease



in mortality.

Araujo's study was only performed on patients older than 50, so the results won't mean the same thing for younger individuals taking the test. But regardless of your age, the test should provide a useful benchmark for your overall health. If you're younger than 50 and have trouble with the test, it ought to be a wake-up call. The good news is that the younger you are, the more time you have to get into better shape.

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