Course Healthcare
Section: Therapeutic Services

James Rumsey Technical Institute

Vital Signs Health Check

What You Will Do

Measure vital signs and learn what those measurements can indicate about the body.

Materials You Will Need

- Paper
- Pencil
- Stopwatch, clock, or timer
- Thermometer (optional)
- Blood pressure cuff (optional)
- Pulse oximeter (optional)

What are Vital Signs?

Vital signs are basic body measurements that help show how someone is doing.
Common vitals include:

- Heart rate (pulse)
- Breathing rate
- Temperature
- Blood pressure (if equipment available)
- Oxygen level (if pulse oximeter available)

Part 1: Measure Pulse (Heart Rate)

Directions:

1. Sit quietly for 2 minutes.
2. Place two fingers on wrist (thumb side) or side of neck.
3. Count beats for 30 seconds.
4. Multiply by 2 for beats per minute (BPM).

Record:
Resting Pulse = _____ BPM

Then Repeat After Activity:
Do 20 jumping jacks or walk briskly for 1 minute.

Pulse After Exercise = _____ BPM

What It Means

- Lower resting pulse can mean efficient heart function.
- Higher pulse after exercise is normal because the body needs more oxygen.
- Pulse should begin slowing during rest.

Part 2: Measure Breathing Rate

Directions:

1. Sit quietly.
2. Count breaths for 30 seconds (1 breath = inhale + exhale).
3. Multiply by 2.

Breathing Rate = _____ breaths/minute

What It Means

- Breathing may increase after exercise, stress, or excitement.

Part 3: Temperature (Optional)

Use thermometer according to directions.

Temperature = _____ °F or °C

What It Means

- Body temperature can change with activity, environment, or illness.

Part 4: Blood Pressure (Optional Adult Help Recommended if Available)

If a home monitor is available:

Blood Pressure = _____ / _____

What It Means

- Blood pressure measures how hard blood pushes on artery walls.

Part 5: Oxygen Level (Optional)

If pulse oximeter available:

Oxygen Saturation = _____ %

What It Means

- Shows how much oxygen is being carried in the blood.

Reflection Questions

- Which vital sign changed the most after activity?
- Why does exercise raise pulse and breathing?
- Why do healthcare workers check vitals first?
- Why should trends over time matter more than one number?