

Incremental Shuttle Walk Test (ISWT)

What is it?

The test is a low risk test that measures how often you can walk back and forth between 2 cones along a 10 metre track. The walking pace will be set and increases every minute. One length of 10 metres is called a 'shuttle' and every minute you complete at a fixed speed is called a 'level'.

Why is it done?

The distance you are able to walk is an indicator of your exercise capacity. When multiple tests are done over time, your doctor can see if your exercise capacity has changed. This information can be used to evaluate treatments or to time surgery.

How is it done?

After arriving in our department you will be taken to a 10 metre track set out in a corridor. Your blood pressure, oxygen saturation and heart rate will be measured. You will also be asked to rate how short on breath you feel on a scale between 1 and 10.

A CD will be played explaining audible cues we call 'bleeps'. These bleeps set the pace of the test and you will need to reach the end of the track before the next bleep sounds.

The pace will initially be very slow, but after each minute, the bleeps will become faster. If you fail to reach the end of the track twice or if you feel you cannot go any further, the test will be ended. When you have missed the end of the track for a second time, or if you feel you cannot go any further, the test stops.

Your blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturation level will be measured once again and you will be asked to rate your shortness of breath. The number of completed levels and shuttles will be recorded onto a report.

After you have recovered from the exercise and if you have no further appointments, you will be allowed to go home.

Please also follow the following instructions before attending the test:

- Do not eat a heavy meal before the test (a light meal is acceptable)
- If you normally use inhalers, please bring them with you
- Please wear suitable flat and comfortable shoes
- Please avoid vigorous exercise 2 hours before the test

Cardiology

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If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.