

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

**A REPORT ON PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING AND TRAINING
IN THE SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**A LEARNING CONTRACT
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
MODULE I**

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**SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Health Services staff of the Austin Police Department for providing me the information from their Department that I requested for this project. In particular I appreciate the efforts of Ms. LaDonna Shirley of the Austin Police Department's Wellness office who undoubtedly spent a great deal of time compiling the information on my behalf.

I am also indebted to the Training staff of the San Antonio Police Department, in particular, Officer Thomas Matjeka who not only provided the requested material, but also lent his insight as I participated in the program itself.

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Introduction

Physical fitness can be defined as the organic condition of the body that enables a person to engage in activities that will require strength, endurance, coordination, speed, agility, power, or accuracy, without causing undue fatigue or exhaustion. Physical fitness gives one the ability to carry out everyday tasks with vigor and alertness while retaining ample energy for leisure-time pursuits as well as stresses encountered during emergency situations.

In this context, stress must also be examined as a factor in the overall condition of the mind as well as the body. Stress is the non-specific response of the body to a demand placed upon it. Stress may be broken down into two major sub-groups of positive and negative. Positive stress, or eustress, is a reaction to a pleasant event or condition, while distress which lies within the negative realm of the definition, can result from physical illness or even be caused due to a simple argument between people.

While physical fitness can be defined and discussed as to its character and meaning, there is no logical debate which would be able to deny its importance to police

officers and law enforcement in general. Unfortunately, law enforcement has been slow to embrace the importance of it, which explains the lack of lengthy background studies and data.

This study will examine the workings of two modern Texas police departments in their respective programs involving their members. The area of study concerns itself primarily with the evaluation of current membership, as well as attempts to improve the levels attained by positive motivation education. While there are some similarities to be noted, the most striking contrast lies in the area of consequence.

Apparently the importance of physical fitness has been realized and progress toward major improvement rapidly is being made. Both departments can be proud of their programs while continuing to focus on the future and the possibilities contained therein.

Part I

In 1984, the Austin Police Department initiated a physical fitness program that was to be directed and monitored by the newly-formed Wellness Division. The program philosophy was to use positive incentives to promote a healthy lifestyle while in turn obtaining a more productive employee. The Wellness Division sent a number of its members to Dallas, Texas in order that they attend the training sessions at The Aerobics Institute, which is currently operated by the founder, Doctor Kenneth Cooper. The Wellness Division is directed by Doctor John Blewett and includes as staff members: LaDonna Shirley - Emergency Medical Technician, Departmental Psychologists, Doctor David Garrison and Doctor Rick Bradstreet, are also available for any counseling needs which may arise. This staff has the function of not only measuring the fitness levels of the department, but is also assisting in program evaluation and designing individual exercise and nutritional plans as well.

There were three conclusions drawn by Doctor Blewett at the completion of testing in 1987. These conclusions were:

- (1) many individuals have met the fifty percentile for aerobic fitness;

- (2) body fat and upper body strength were the areas that appeared to need the most improvement;
- (3) some medical problems were identified and corrected prior to their leading to serious consequences.

A total of four hundred eighty five participants were tested in 1987 and according to Doctor Blewett, most of that number scored high enough to pass the program.

On May 12, 1989 a special order was issued by the Chief of Police. In effect, it provided for mandatory officer participation in the program which had until that time been voluntary. Briefly, the order states that the officer will be required to report to the Health Services Section wearing appropriate exercise clothing and while there:

- (1) complete a personal health history questionnaire;
- (2) undergo a physical examination;
- (3) perform tests which would indicate muscular strength, endurance, body composition, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance.

The officer is considered to have passed the mandatory physical assessment if the examinations fail to reveal any physical deficiency that would prevent him from performing the duties related to his employment. The results are reviewed with each individual and he is provided with a copy of the results. An individualized fitness program can at this time be prepared upon request.

Upon determination that an individual has not passed the program, a fitness program is then prepared with specific goals, as well as a target date for attainment of those goals. Individuals are then tested again within a six-month time period and are required to show an overall increase of five percent in all of the areas of deficiency. Officers who have improved but not yet reached minimum standards in the required categories are again tested within three months and no referral is made to his commanding officer. At the end of the next three month period, and after retesting, if sufficient improvement is not made, the following steps are taken:

- (1) give the officer an individualized improvement plan provided by the Health Services Division;
- (2) advise the officer what the acceptable levels are and that these levels must be attained within the next three months.

As consequences, the officers division commander will:

- (1) issue the officer a written reprimand;
- (2) advise the officer that he will not be allowed to perform outside employment or overtime, except that necessitated by the court or departmental emergency;
- (3) give the officer a copy of written goals and guidelines on how to achieve them, along with a list of resources available to assist in their

achievement;

- (4) advise the officer of the time of the next three-month evaluation and if the necessary improvements are not made, that the following steps will be taken:

- (a) advise the officer that he will not be considered for any transfers to preferred assignments,
- (b) further advise the officer that if improvement is not noted during the next three-month test period that further action may include disciplinary suspension, withholding of any upcoming promotion, and possible decertification.

It should also be noted that in the chief's order there is a provision where the chief has the authority and the discretion to consider special circumstances, as well as place an officer on a particular assignment in order to match the officer's capabilities with the needs of the department.

While this program seems emphasize the negative aspects of physical fitness testing, it should be noted that the extreme levels of discipline previously described have not yet become necessary. Citing information provided by Doctor Blewett, there seems to be a positive movement towards self improvement without the use of negative discipline. This

fact may possibly be attributed to the rewards system built into the program. If an officer achieves a score of ninety percent in all tested categories, excluding body fat, he receives a "healthbar" which he may wear pinned to his uniform, setting him in a special position among his peers. Since the initiation of this aspect of the program, the number of officers who achieve this recognition award has risen from one to nearly twenty percent of those tested. The exact results of the latest testing is included in the illustrations section of this presentation.

Part II

Beginning in 1987, the San Antonio Police Department Training Academy began a program designed to improve the fitness levels of the department at all ranks and assignment levels. This program was to be incorporated into the yearly forty-hour inservice training session which had recently become mandatory by state statute as well as civil service contract with the Police Officers Association. Basically, what was to be created was a one day eight-hour block of instruction which was to not only measure overall fitness levels over a broad spectrum, but also to set in motion corrective and improvement forces. This program has evolved into what is now known as the wellness day portion of the in-service training school. This session consists of classroom instruction on nutrition and dietary habits, prevention of coronary diseases, as well as control of cholesterol and diabetes.

The initial portion of the day is devoted to actual physical measurement of an officer against the standards set by the Aerobics Institute of Dallas, Texas. Several of the training academy staff were previously sent through a fitness instruction training session at the institute.

Though an officer is not required to participate in the actual physical measurement, all efforts are made by the training academy staff to encourage one hundred percent participation in the program. The scales used for measurement are included in the illustrations section of this presentation. All of the results of testing are placed formatted for computerization and entered into the officer's training file at the academy for later use in monitoring further improvements or degeneration of physical conditioning. These results are also used as a basis for the departmental entry standards set for applicants to the department.

Currently, there are no existing requirements for a tenured officer to maintain a specific fitness level. Officers are encouraged to score as high as possible on the physical test and thereby increase the norms which increase the standards that can be set by the applicant processing division.

Also built into the system is a recognition program in which officers who score in the ninety-to-one-hundred percentile are recognized for their achievement. Those rated as very fit are recognized and presented with a certificate as well as a shirt which bears a characture on the front. Those who achieve a perfect score are presented the "Blue Tiger" plaque by the training division commander as well as a certificate of accomplishment. If in

successive years an officer repeats this achievement, his name is added to the large wall plaque which hangs in the training academy lobby. The first year of the program's operation saw only one "Blue Tiger". However, this year there were a total of four officers in this bracket.

All sworn officers are required to attend the annual in-service training regardless of departmental rank or assignment; therefore, each officer is offered the benefits of this program. Selected members of the training academy staff supervise and monitor the program as well as the results and are available for advice and referral. As indicated on the chartwork supplied in the illustration section, a wide range of tests are used for the physical fitness evaluation sheet. The results of each test are examined and recorded in the officer's permanent training file, and he is provided with a copy for his own records. With this information an officer may keep a constant record of his abilities and focus on areas needing improvement.

The primary intention of the wellness program is to not only encourage attention to physical fitness improvement but to discover possible harmful conditions that exist as well. If during the program a particularly dangerous condition is discovered, the officer is immediately sent to a physician for treatment. This physician will be of the officer's choosing and the officer is excused from further participation in that particular session. If a less serious

condition, though not immediately life threatening, is discovered, the officer is advised to seek medical assistance as soon as possible. Unfortunately, a number of both situations has occurred in this past training year; however, the number has remained the same for the past two years.

Recognition of the importance of the wellness program necessitates including details of the session on a step-by-step basis. Officers meet in the classroom for the initial portion of the session and films are shown on the dangers and problems created by tobacco usage. After a brief discussion period and a short break, officers report to the gymnasium for actual testing. Prior to any physical activity, participants are instructed on the proper methods for stretching and warming-up the muscles. This aspect is not only important in improving performance but assists in preventing injury, which can be caused by over-extending of rapid exertion. The guidelines and illustrations for this section are printed on a reference sheet and each officer is provided a copy for further reference and use.

Once participants are properly warmed-up, the session moves to the outdoor track for the cardio-vascular training section which is based on a one-and-a-half mile course. The course is laid out on an asphalt track to simulate actual street conditions encountered by officers during their normal tour of duty. Upon completion of this portion of

testing, participants return to the gymnasium for testing of body fat, flexibility, sit-ups, and push-ups. After all of the participants are tested in each respective area, the academy staff scores and rates the grade sheet of each participant according to the Cooper Scale. Though encouraged to at least attempt each activity, the testing is strictly voluntary and each individual is reminded to be aware of his abilities and limitations. The results are then recorded in the officer's permanent file which is maintained at the Training Academy, and a copy is later provided to each participant.

Time is then allowed for showers and a lunch period and class convenes once again in the classroom. The Academy staff introduces an outside group which has set up equipment in the room for the purpose of testing various blood-related factors. This particular group is affiliated with a local hospital and is paid by the Academy for the testing. Each participant is then tested on a voluntary basis to determine cholesterol levels, pulse rate, blood pressure and blood sugar level. Once these measurements are recorded, the normal levels are given as participants review their score sheets. Time is then allotted for questions and answers. Specific recommendations are made in respect to maintenance of certain levels and improvement of those areas that appear to require attention. A presentation is also specifically made for those who either have diabetes currently or those

prone to it by way of lineage. If a serious condition is discovered, referrals to medical personnel are made and follow-up meetings are encouraged and recommended.

The testing phase now complete, the academy staff distributes all score sheets and recognition is given to those participants whose scores are in the highest brackets. All are again encouraged to pursue higher levels during the next session. The recognition system for these high achievers within the San Antonio Police Department specifically targets what turns out to be only a few individuals each year. A participant scoring 240 points from a possible 250 on the Cooper Scale is awarded a t-shirt which bears a departmental characture of a true "Dudley" printed on the front of the shirt. A score of 250 points, which is one hundred percent in each tested category, earns the participant a "Blue Tiger" award, which consists of a handsome plaque embossed with this achievement as well as a certificate of recognition, both signed and presented by the academy commander in the presence of the participant group. A large wall plaque which hangs in the reception hall of the academy is reserved for the names of the "Blue Tigers" who are able to maintain their perfect score for two or more consecutive years. This year was the first year of this portion of the awards and the new plaque was first unveiled at the ceremony. All present were encouraged to join this elite group.

As observed in the illustrations section of this document (see Appendices I and II), there has been steady improvement noted in most measurable fitness testing categories. Should this trend continue at the present rate, there will most certainly be a time when the entire department finds itself recognized as 100 percent fitness trained.

Part III

Though only in place for a two year period, the program of officer fitness used by the San Antonio Police Department has produced encouraging results. Not only have the number of participants increased, but the overall fitness scores have improved as well. The program in The Austin Police Department has built into itself a mandatory achievement requirement, positive recognition systems, and a punitive system for those who fail to achieve the necessary levels set by the Department. Both Departments have noted an increase in participants as well as an increase in overall scoring, while neither experiences negative ramifications such as resentment or large-scale resistance to their respective program. It should be noted, however, that the Austin program was only recently made mandatory by its Chief of Police and there will possibly be differing reactions as the program is fully placed into motion. Both Departments have modeled their programs after the program taught by the Aerobic Institute of Dallas and there seems to be agreement by both that this program is currently the most effective available. Both departments are planning to mold their programs to changing needs and update them as new data and

techniques are made available. These two Departments, though serving the same public in different sized cities, seem to be equally committed to improving the fitness levels of their officers and therefore performing their tasks in a more efficient manner. It is encouraging to see this developing trend; however, there should be reservations about any program designed to improve employee fitness levels that does not include a mandatory attendance and achievement provision.

As health care and workman compensation costs continue to climb, many organizations, including the San Antonio Police Department, have come to realize that they can ill afford not to have some type of an employee health and fitness program in place. Most all organizations, whether large or small, public or private, are feeling the drain of time lost due to illness in both production losses as well as increased costs for health care and medical insurance programs. It can be considered a safe assumption that employee fitness is not merely a passing trend but a necessity for the survival of any organization and must be approached from the entry level and maintained upward through the rank and file. Careful planning and implementation, as well as encouragement, are a vital part of overall acceptance which proves to be the determining factor in the success or failure of any newly-instituted program.

The very lifestyle of a police officer dictates that he maintain a fitness level that is at least equal to, if not better than, the public he serves or the elements of society that he must confront on a daily basis.

Granted that it may not be necessary for a police officer to have super human strength, speed or agility, a truly honest officer will readily admit that there are times and certain situations which call for him to possess some of all three of these attributes. Officer standards continue to rise in both organizational levels as well as in the eye of the public which place an increasingly higher demand on both the officer as well as the organization to which he belongs. In all probability, the next few years will see more Texas Police Departments following the example set by the San Antonio and Austin Police Departments and initiate programs themselves which will in the final analysis prove to be not only desirable but necessary for the completion of their assigned role in society.

APPENDIX I
COOPER EVALUATION SCORE SHEET

AGE

FITNESS CATEGORY	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
MEN'S BODY FAT					
EXCELLENT (50)	2.2 9.7	4.5 13.4	6.1 15.6	8.1 17.6	6.5 17.2
GOOD (40)	9.8 14.0	13.5 17.0	15.7 19.1	17.7 21.1	17.3 21.2
FAIR (30)	14.1 17.5	17.1 21.0	19.2 22.1	21.2 23.9	21.3 24.6
POOR (20)	17.6 22.0	20.1 23.7	22.2 25.8	24.0 27.3	24.7 28.4
VERY POOR (10)	22.1 38.9	23.8 36.4	25.9 38.1	27.4 38.2	28.5 40.2
MEN'S FLEXIBILITY					
EXCELLENT (50)	24.1+	23+	22.3+	21.5+	21.1+
GOOD (40)	19.6 24.0	19.3 22.9	17.5 22.2	16.5 21.4	16.0 21.0
FAIR (30)	15.1 19.5	14.8 19.2	12.8 17.4	10.6 16.4	10.9 15.9
POOR (20)	10.6 15.0	9.1 14.7	8.1 12.7	6.9 10.5	5.9 10.8
VERY POOR (10)	10.5	9.0	8.0	6.8	5.8

COOPER EVALUATION SCORE SHEET

AGE

FITNESS CATEGORY	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
MEN'S SIT-UPS					
EXCELLENT (50)	51+	49+	47+	44+	44+
GOOD (40)	42-50	40-48	37-46	32-43	32-43
FAIR (30)	34-41	31-39	26-36	20-31	18-31
POOR (20)	25-33	22-30	15-25	7-19	4-17
VERY POOR (10)	17-24	13-21	5-14	0-6	0-3
MEN'S PUSH-UPS					
EXCELLENT (50)	53+	44+	38+	30+	
GOOD (40)	44-52	36-43	31-37	24-29	
FAIR (30)	34-43	29-35	24-30	17-23	
POOR (20)	28-33	23-28	17-23	11-16	
VERY POOR (10)	0-27	0-22	0-16	0-10	
MEN'S 1.5 MILE RUN					
SUPERIOR (50)	<9:45	<10:00	<10:30	<11:00	<11:15
EXCELLENT (40)	9:45	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:15
	10:45	11:00	11:30	12:30	13:59
GOOD (30)	10:46	11:01	11:31	12:31	14:00
	12:00	12:30	13:00	14:30	16:15
FAIR (20)	12:01	12:31	13:01	14:31	16:16
	14:00	14:45	15:35	17:00	19:00
POOR (10)	14:01	14:46	15:36	17:01	19:01
	16:00	16:30	17:30	19:00	20:00

COOPER EVALUATION SCORE SHEET

AGE

FITNESS CATEGORY	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
WOMEN'S BODY FAT					
EXCELLENT (50)	4.2 14.8	4.1 16.7	7.4 20.1	9.9 23.3	
GOOD (40)	14.9 18.9	16.8 20.6	20.2 24.1	23.4 27.4	
FAIR (30)	19.0 22.8	20.7 24.0	24.2 27.2	27.5 30.9	
POOR (20)	22.9 27.1	24.1 28.6	27.3 31.4	31.0 35.0	
VERY POOR (10)	27.2 42.6	28.7 42.3	31.5 42.5	35.1 45.3	
WOMEN'S FLEXIBILITY					
EXCELLENT (50)	25.5+	24.9+	24.5+	23.7+	
GOOD (40)	21.6 25.4	20.8 24.8	20.0 24.4	19.6 23.6	
FAIR (30)	18.5 21.5	16.4 20.7	15.5 19.9	15.6 19.5	
POOR (20)	15.6 18.4	12.6 16.3	10.9 15.4	11.5 15.5	
VERY POOR (10)	15.5	12.5	10.8	11.4	

COOPER EVALUATION SCORE SHEET

AGE

FITNESS CATEGORY	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
WOMEN'S SIT-UPS					
EXCELLENT (50)	52+	42+	38+	37+	
GOOD (40)	41-51	33-41	27-37	26-36	
FAIR (30)	30-40	24-32	15-26	14-25	
POOR (20)	19-29	14-23	6-14	5-13	
VERY POOR (10)	8-18	5-13	1-5	0-4	
WOMEN'S PUSH-UPS					
EXCELLENT (50)	25+	23+	18+	14+	
GOOD (40)	20-24	18-22	14-17	10-13	
FAIR (30)	14-19	12-17	9-13	6-9	
POOR (20)	9-13	7-11	5-8	3-5	
VERY POOR (10)	0-8	0-6	0-4	0-2	
WOMEN'S 1.5 MILE RUN					
SUPERIOR (50)	<12:30	<13:00	<13:45	<14:30	
EXCELLENT (40)	12:30	13:00	13:45	14:30	
	13:30	14:30	15:55	16:30	
GOOD (30)	13:31	14:31	15:56	16:31	
	15:54	16:30	17:30	19:00	
FAIR (20)	15:55	16:31	17:31	19:01	
	18:30	19:00	19:30	20:00	
POOR (10)	18:31	19:01	19:31	20:01	
	19:00	19:30	20:00	20:30	

APPENDIX II

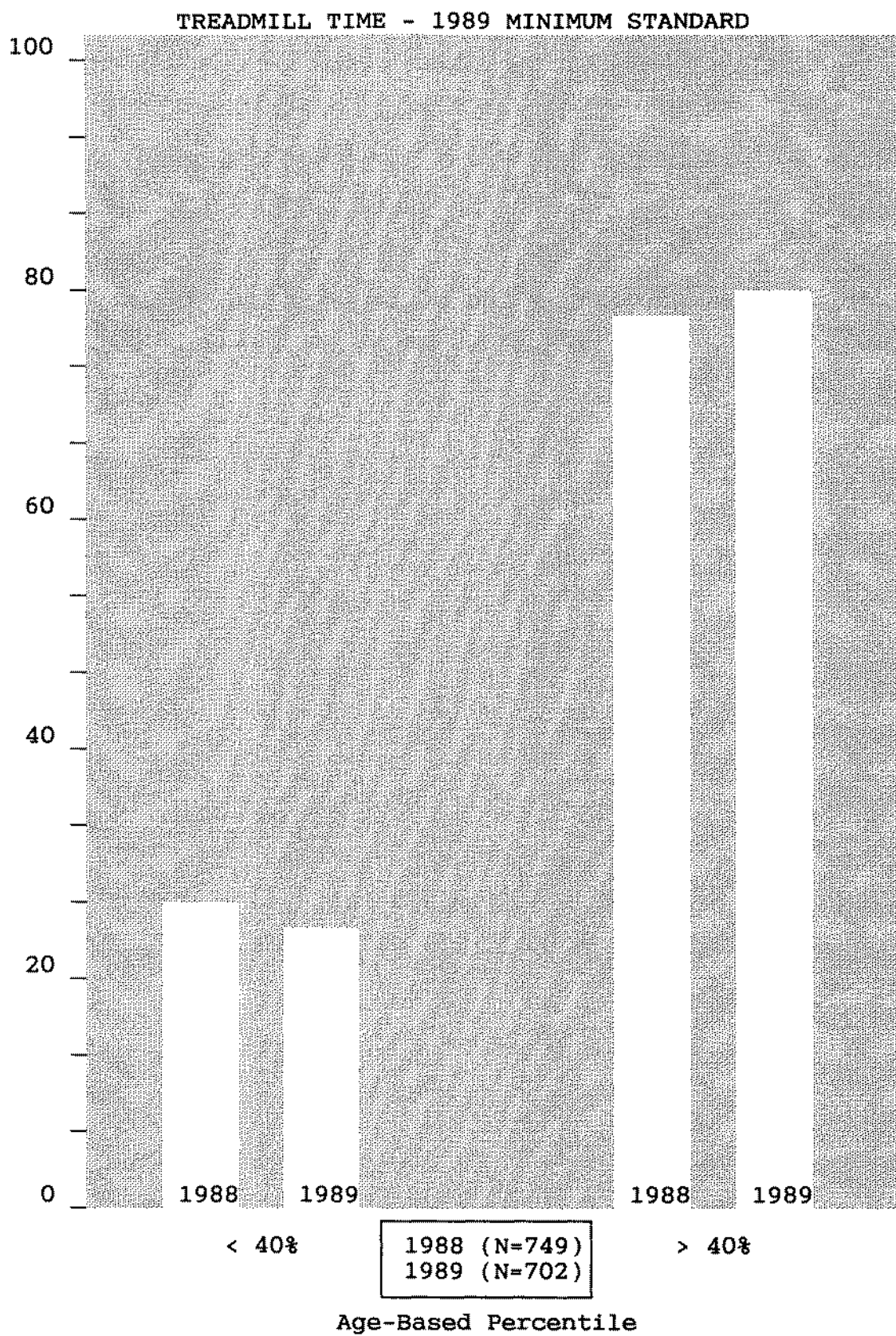
AUSTIN POLICE OFFICERS FITNESS SUMMARY

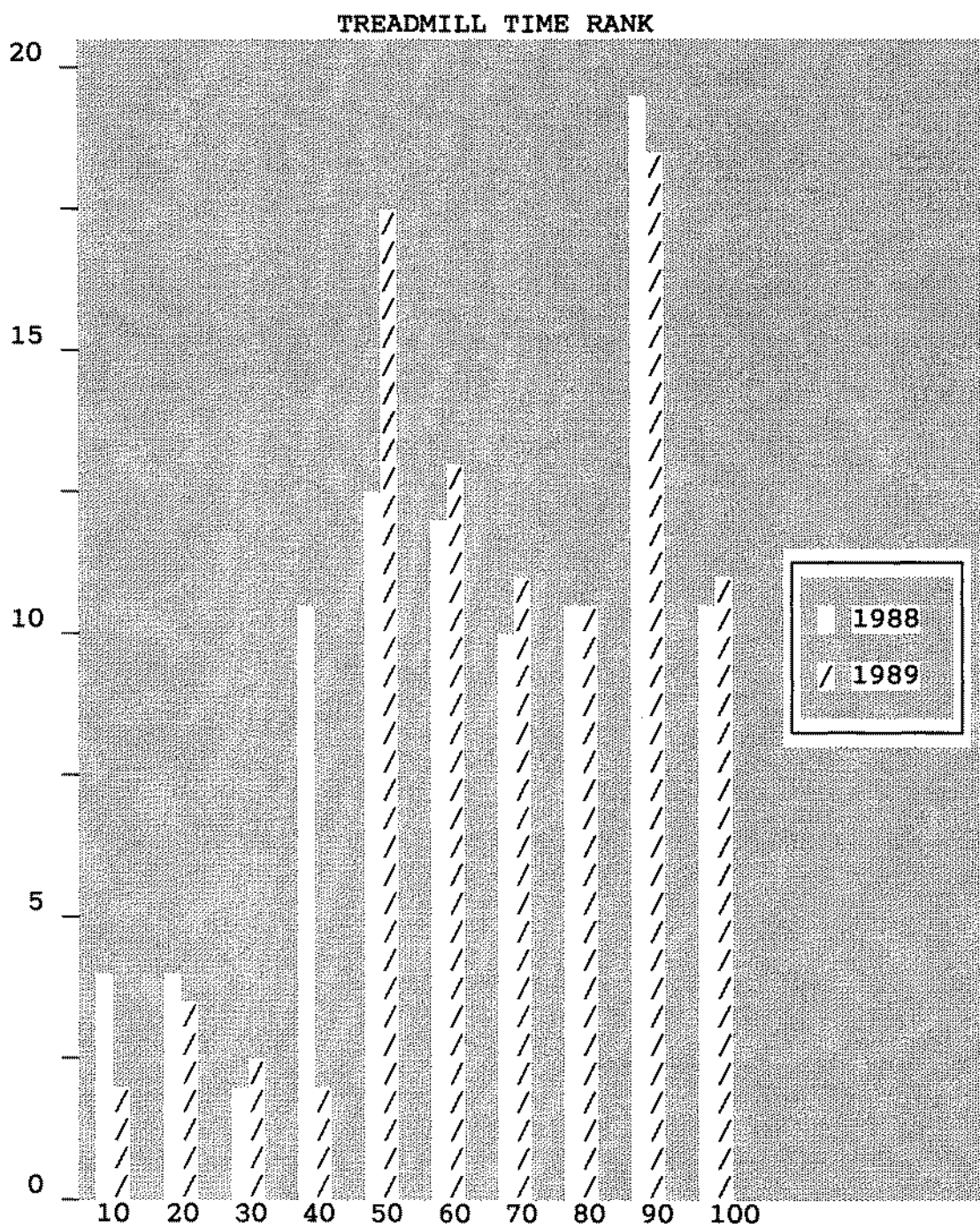
Percentage Officers reaching 40th percentile or better:

	SIT-UPS	BENCH PRESS	FLEXIBILITY	TREADMILL TIME	BODY FAT
1987	68.5%	76.8%	67.7%	74.4%	56.7%
1988	76.6%	78.1%	68.0%	77.5%	56.7%

Physiological data:

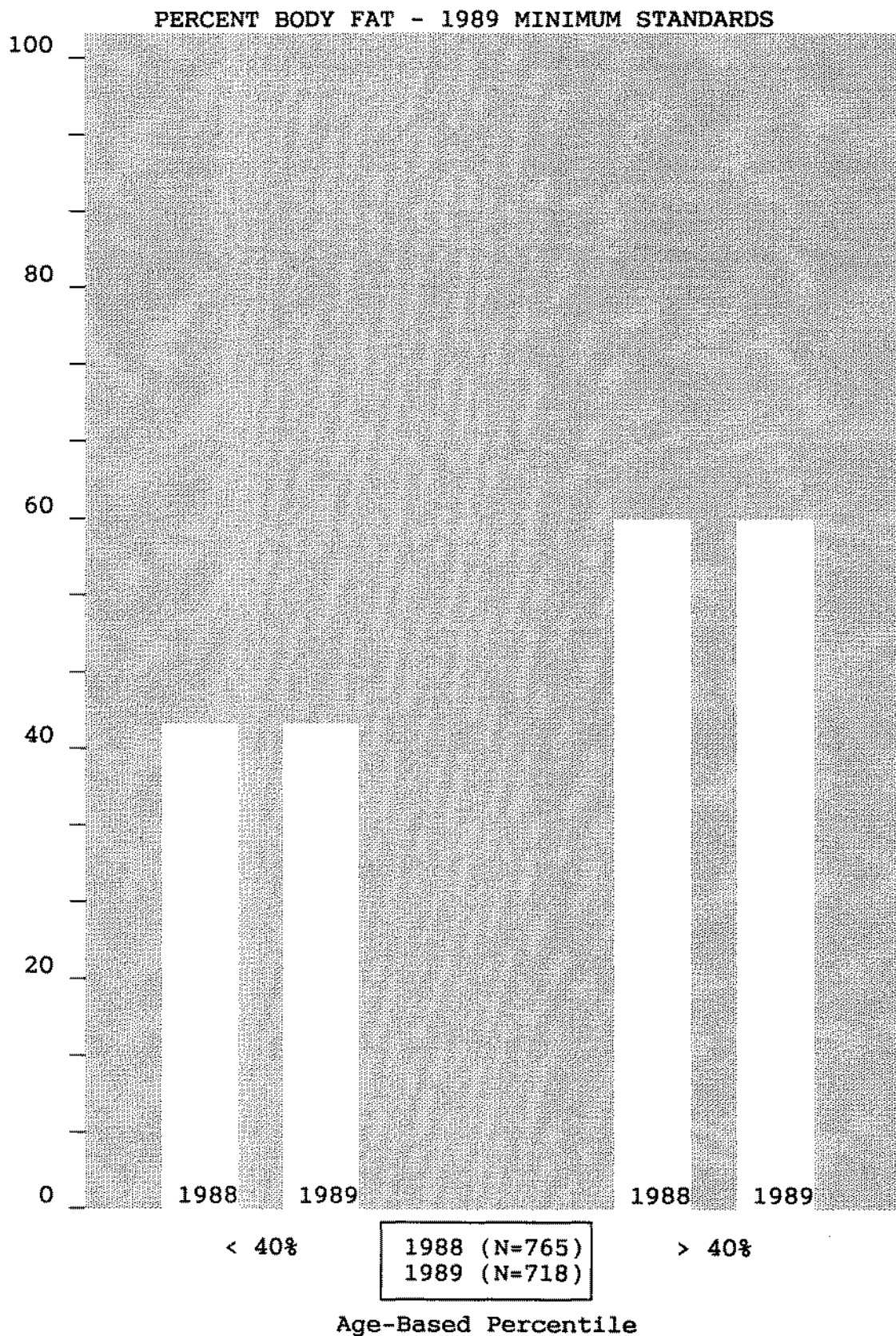
	REST PULSE	SYSTOLIC BP	DIASTOLIC BP	WEIGHT
1987	74.4	131.4	83.6	188.7
1988	69.9	129.4	82.4	189.0

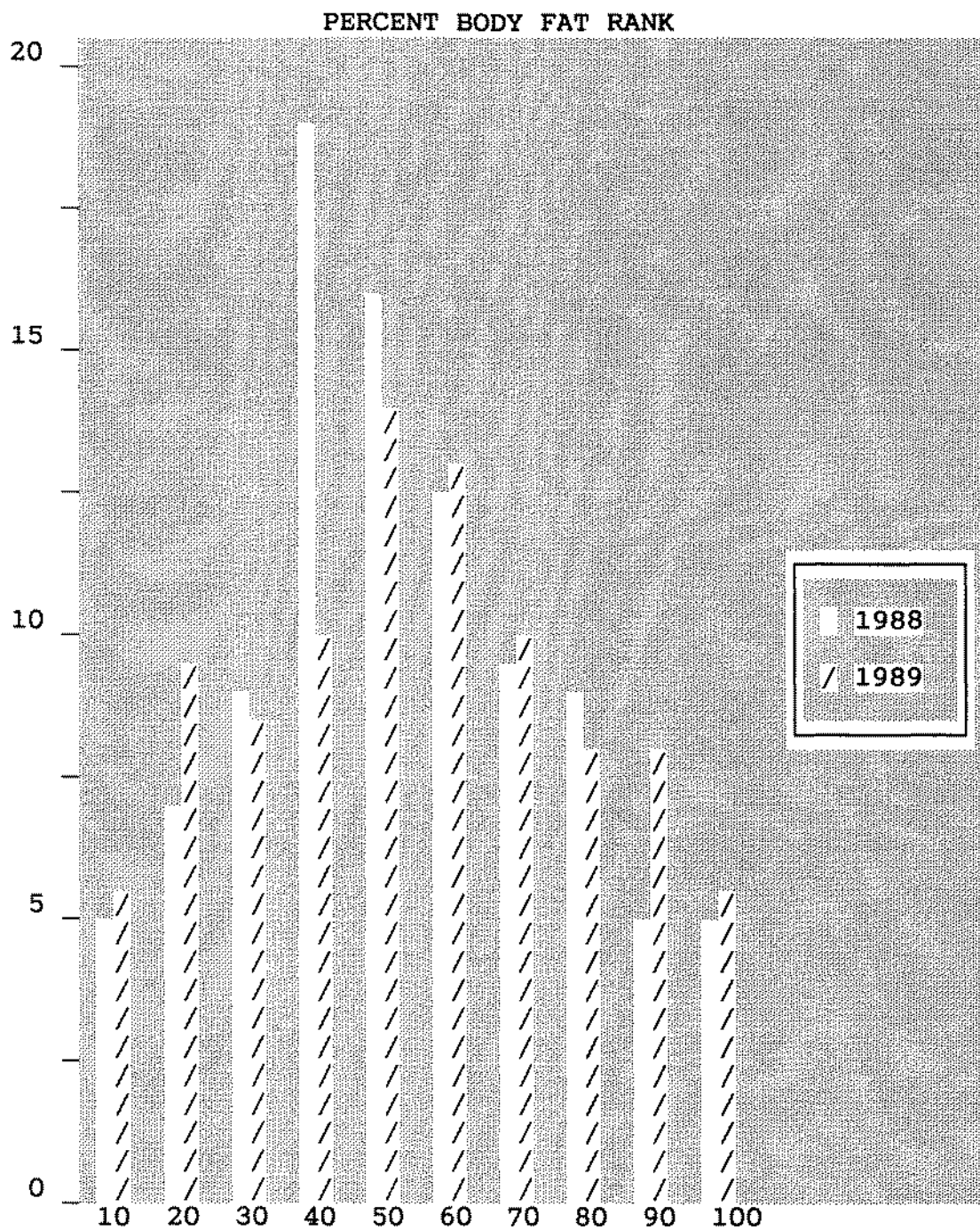




1988 (N=749)
1989 (N=702)

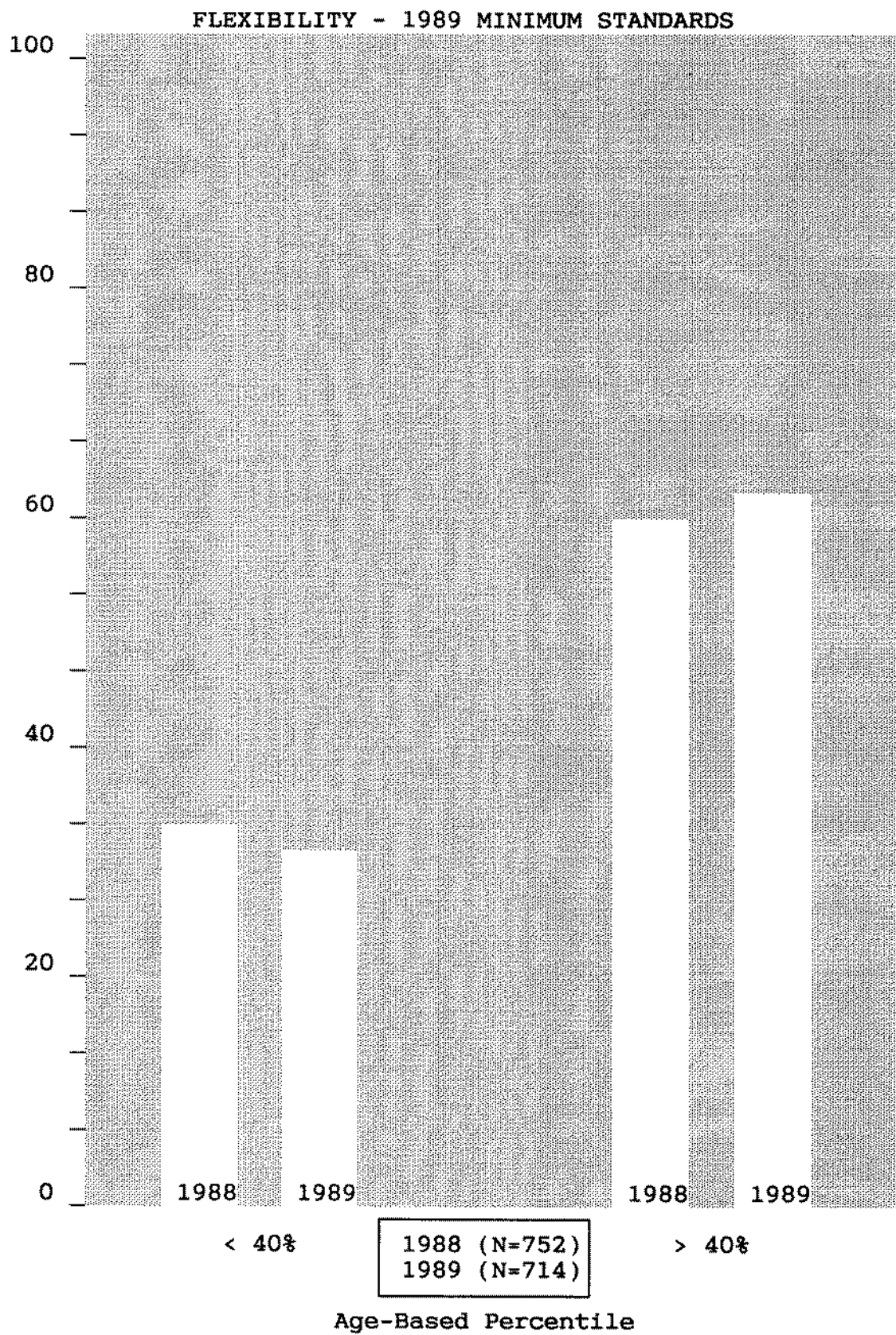
Age-Based Percentile

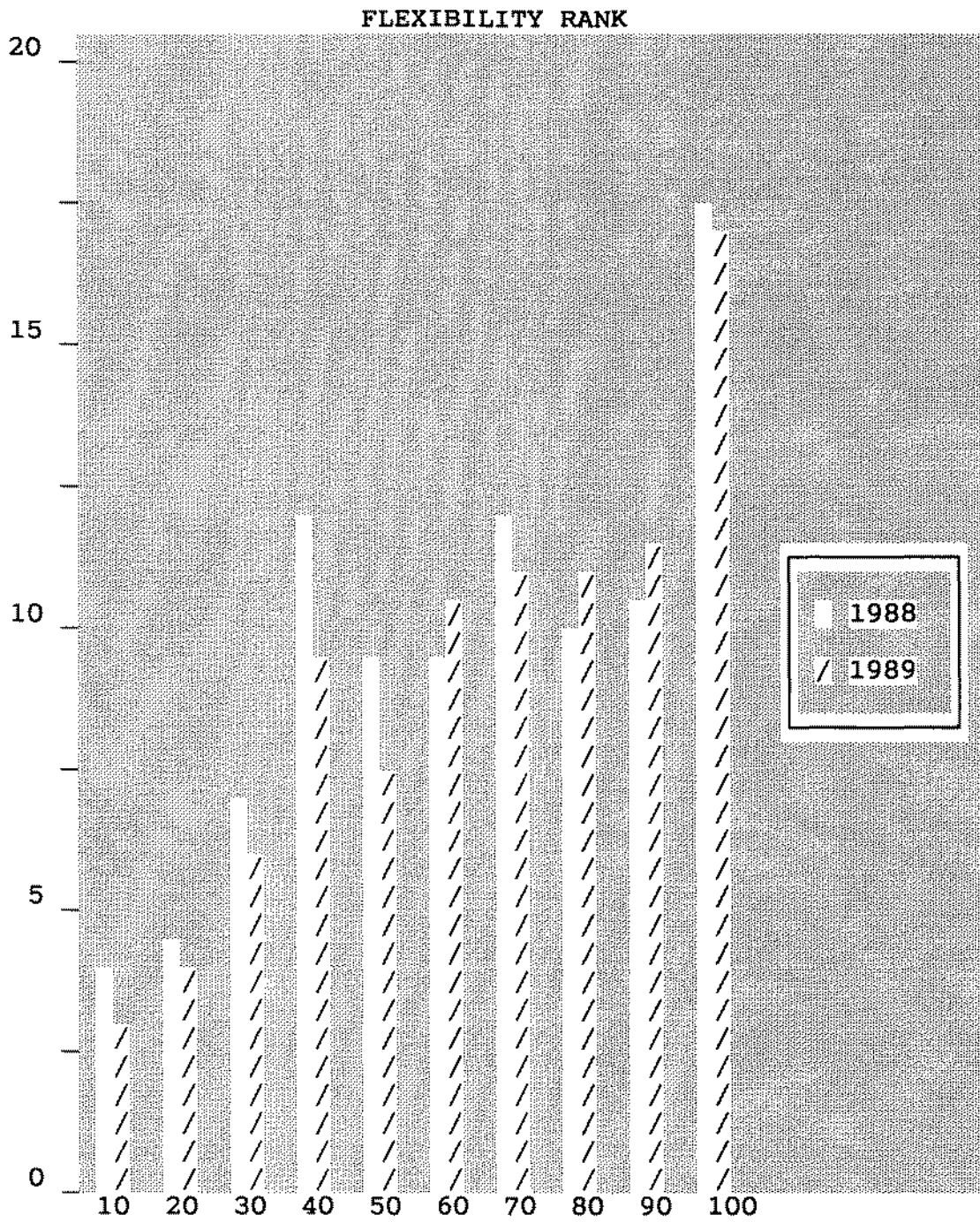




1988	(N=765)
1989	(N=718)

Age-Based Percentile

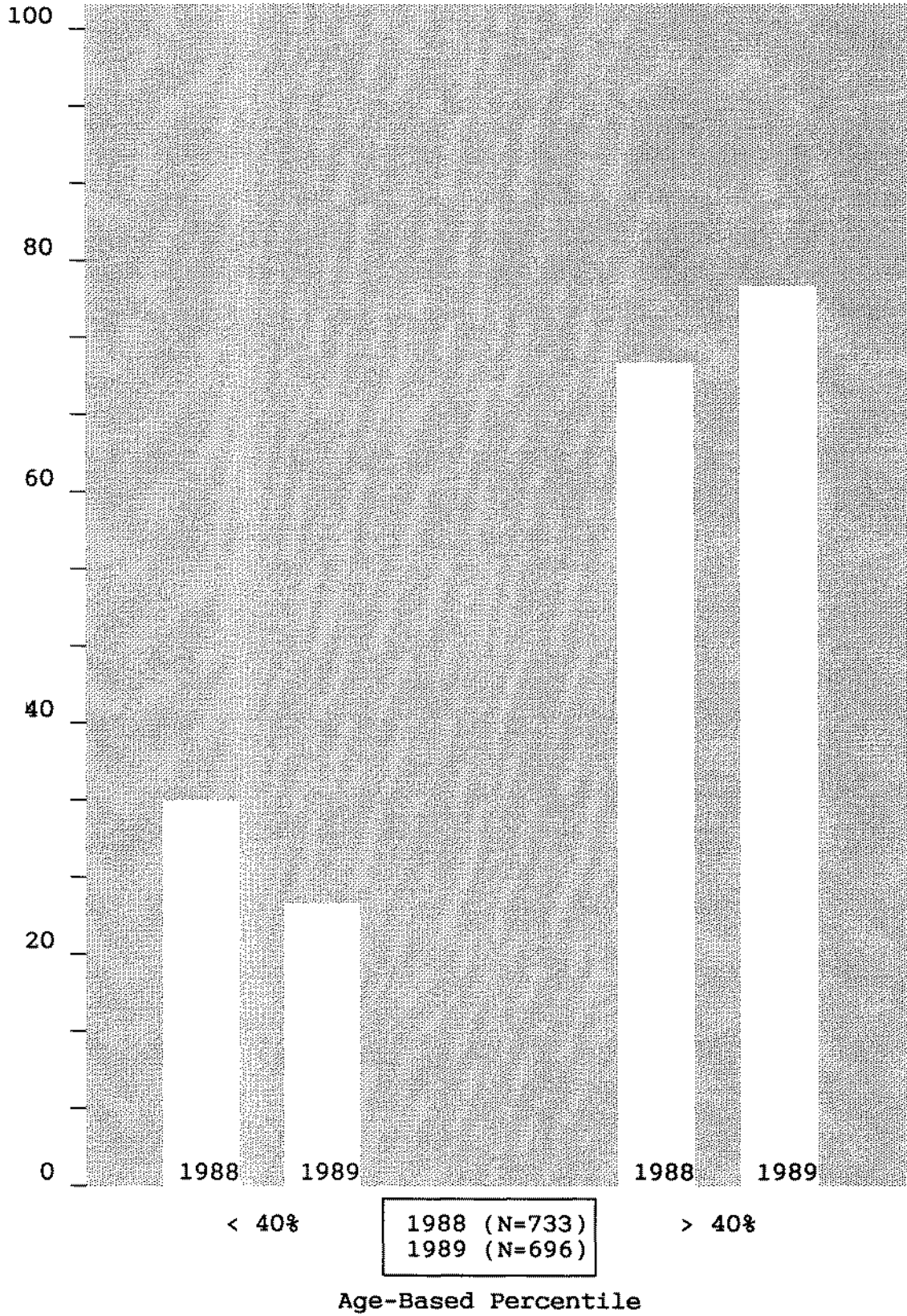


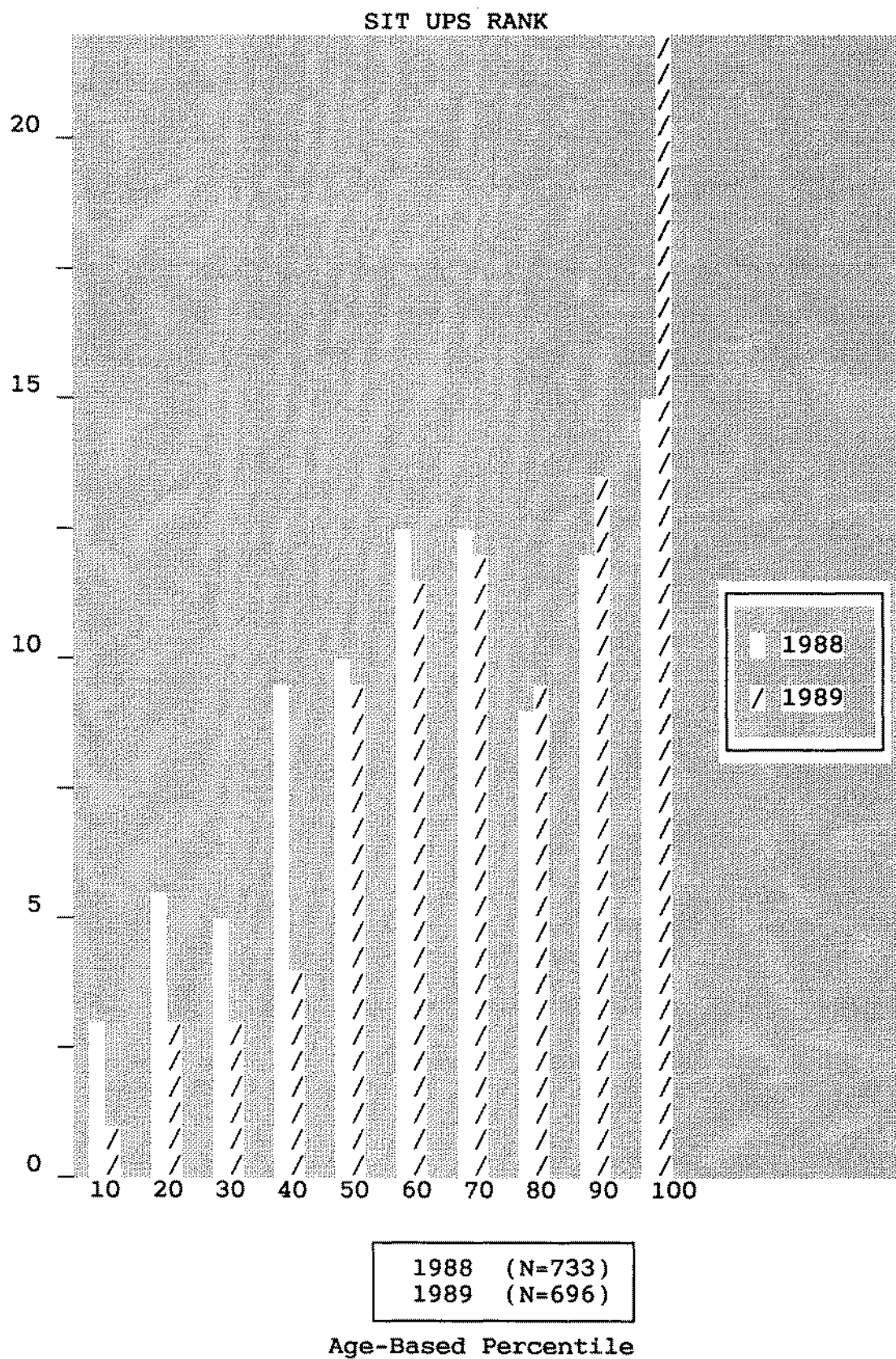


1988	(N=752)
1989	(N=714)

Age-Based Percentile

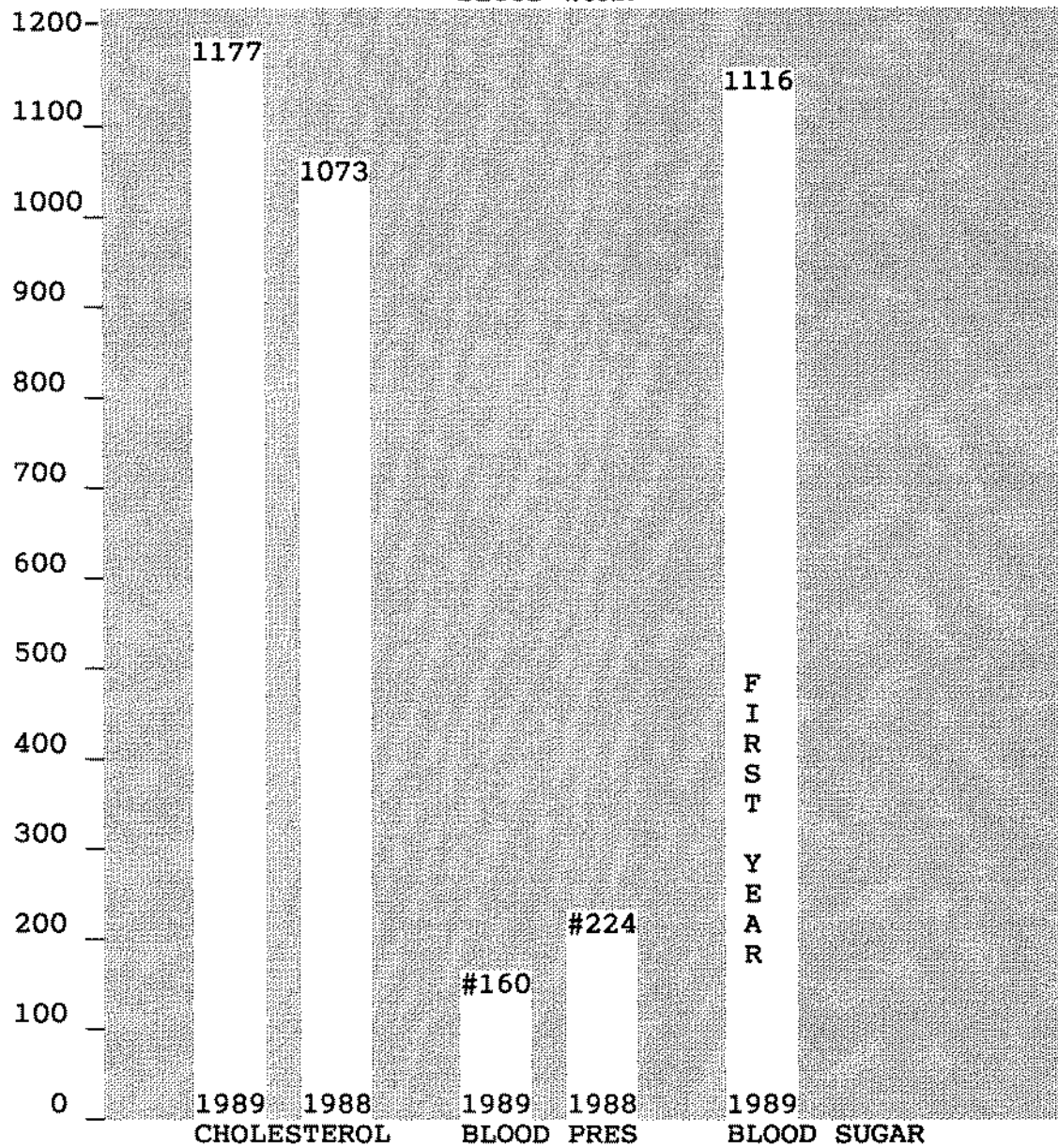
SIT UPS - 1989 MINIMUM STANDARDS



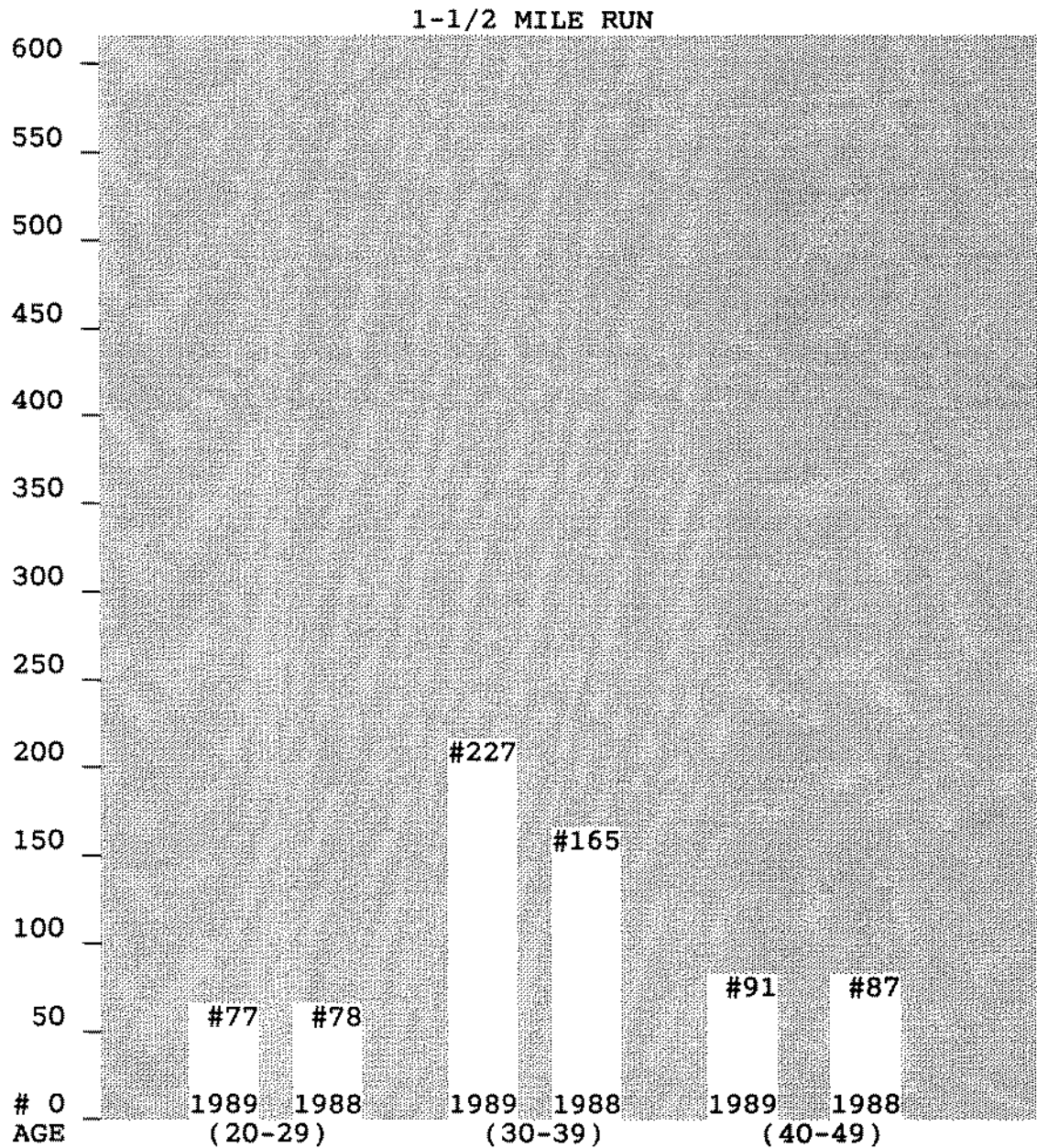


APPENDIX III

BLOOD WORK

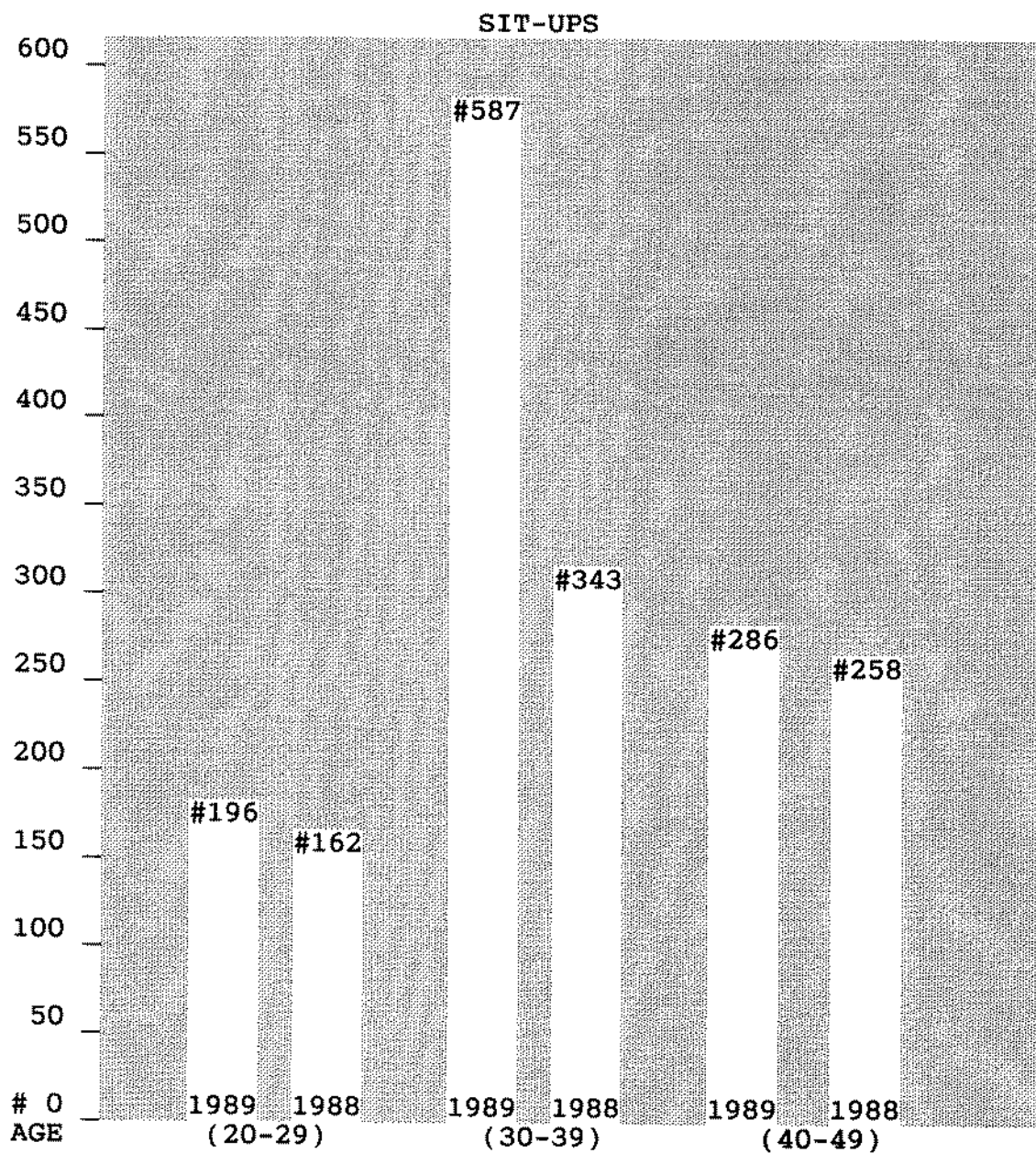


Test (Note: No females over 40 tested)	1989	1988
Cholesterol Less than 200 (Excellent)	854	657
Cholesterol 200-239 (Safe)	323	421
Cholesterol Greater than 240 (Unsafe)	131	210
Cholesterol Total Tested	1308	1283
Tested Safe (cholesterol)	1170	1073
Percentage Safe (cholesterol)	90%	84%
Blood Pressure Over 140/90 (Unsafe)	160	224
Blood Sugar 60-120 (Safe)	1161	
Blood Sugar 121-140 (Questionable)	79	
Blood Sugar Greater than 140 (High)	58	
Total Tested (Blood Sugar)	1298	



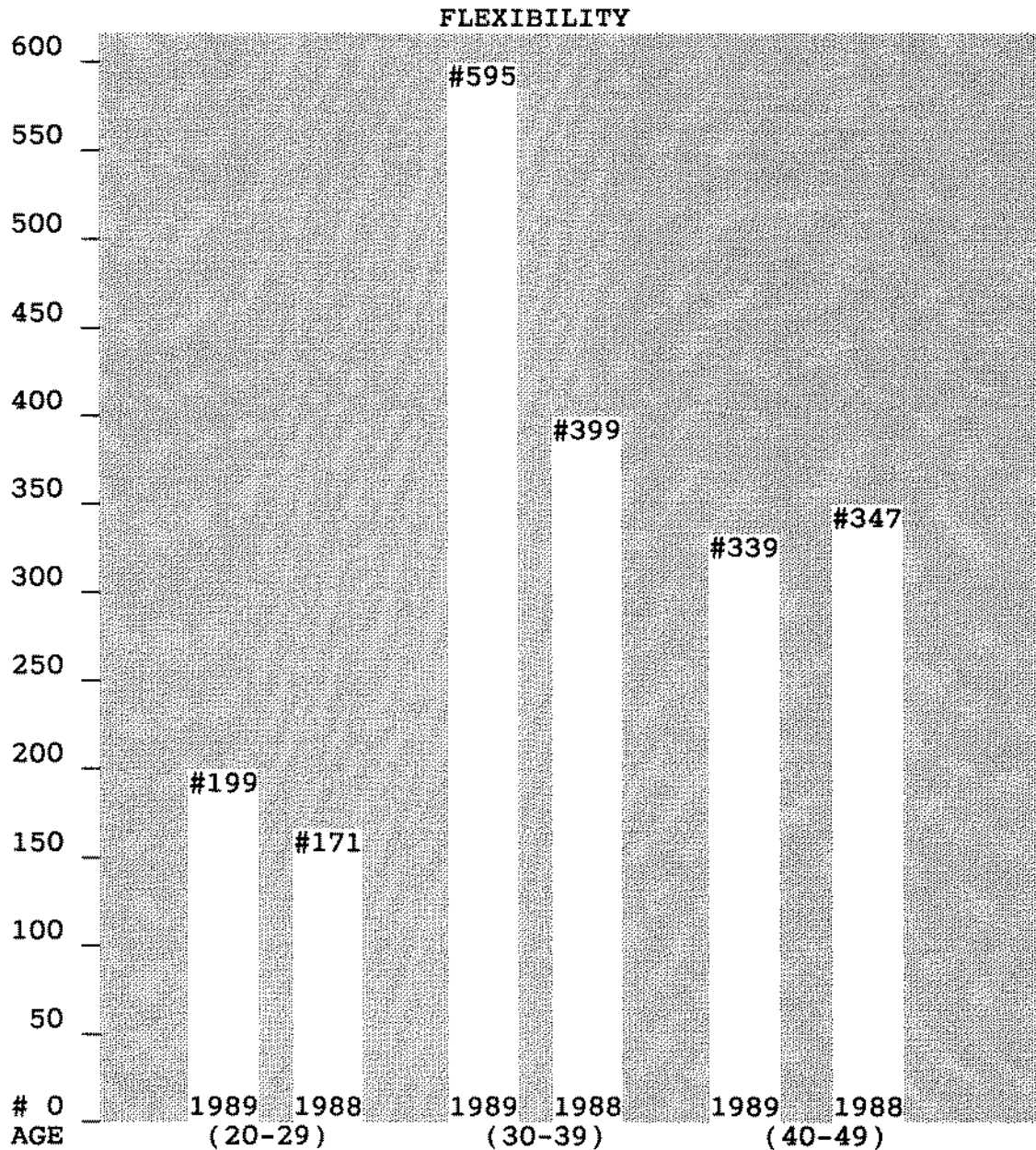
of passing scores 30 points or better on the Cooper Scale by age groups. (Note: No females over 40 tested)

<u>Totals Tested</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>
Age 20-29	190	179
30-39	562	419
40-49	273	341
Total Tested	1025	939
Total Passing	395	330
Total Not Passing	630	609
Pass Percentage	39%	35%



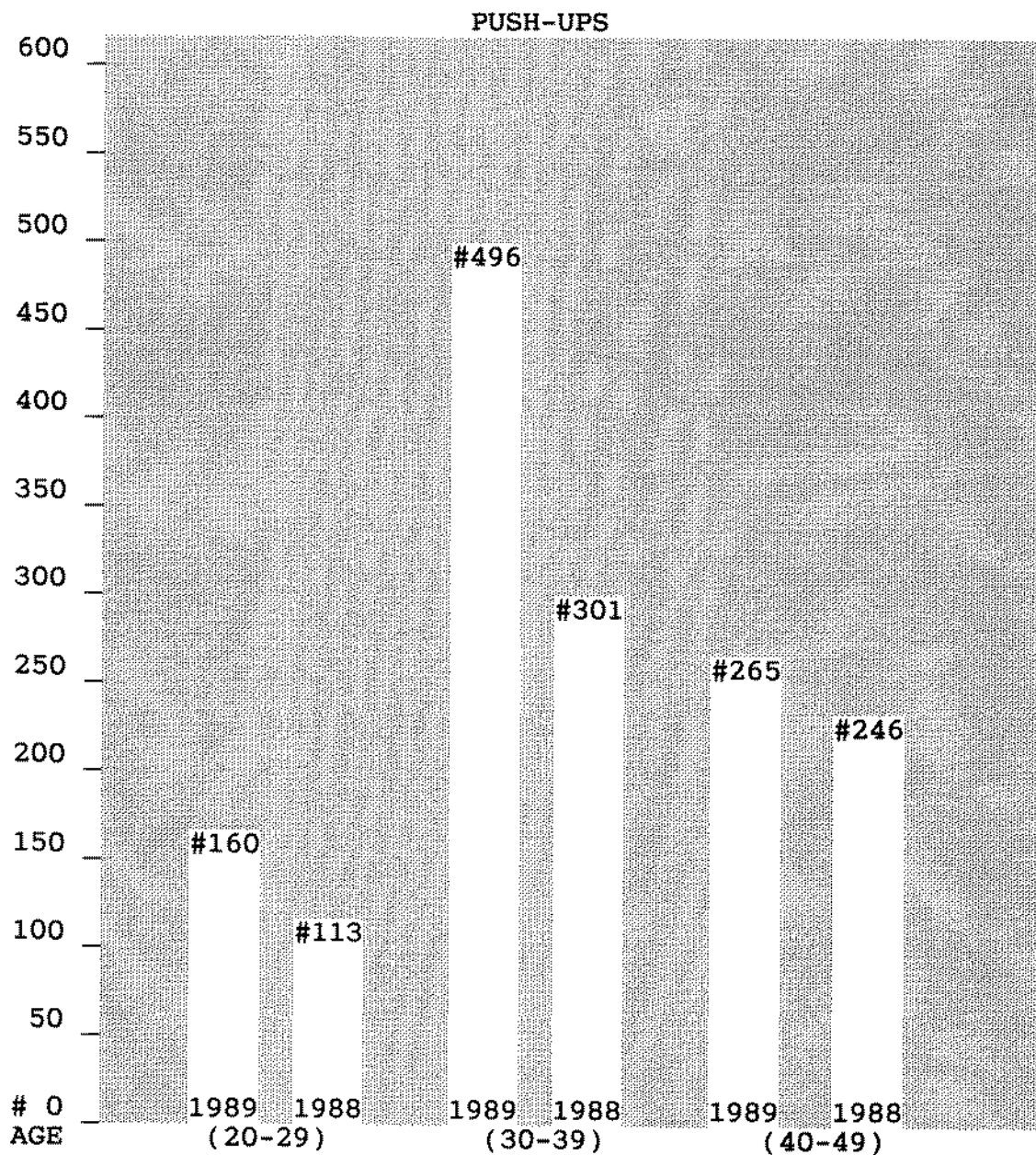
of passing scores 30 points or better on the Cooper Scale by age groups. (Note: No females over 40 tested)

<u>Totals Tested</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>
Age 20-29	218	184
30-39	656	417
40-49	363	357
Total Tested	1237	958
Total Passing	1069	791
Total Not Passing	168	167
Pass Percentage	86%	83%



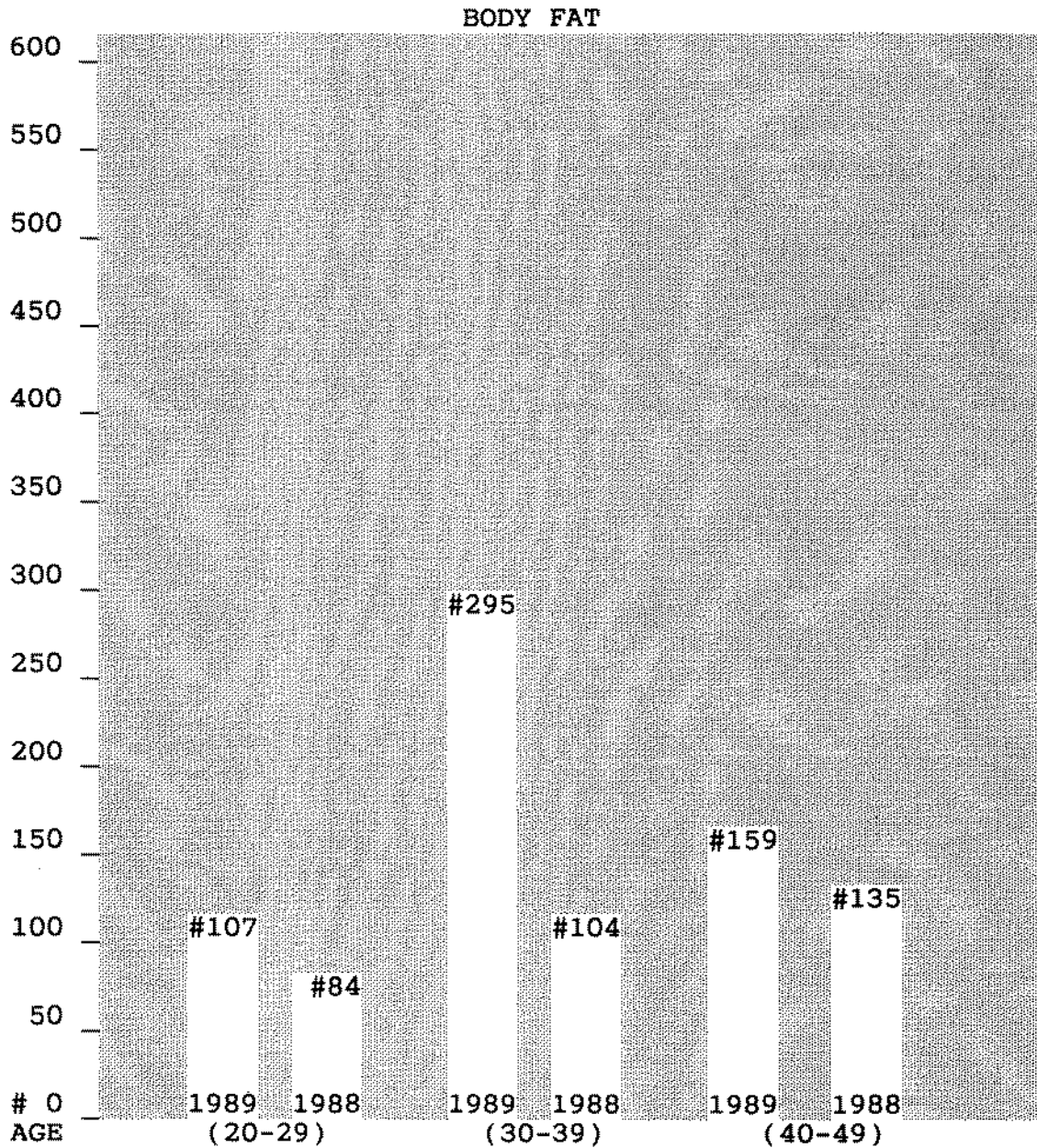
of passing scores 30 points or better on the Cooper Scale by age groups. (Note: No females over 40 tested)

<u>Totals Tested</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>
Age 20-29	218	185
30-39	662	431
40-49	374	374
Total Tested	1254	990
Total Passing	1133	917
Total Not Passing	121	73
Pass Percentage	90%	93%



of passing scores 30 points or better on the Cooper Scale by age groups. (Note: No females over 40 tested)

<u>Totals Tested</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>
Age 20-29	214	183
30-39	651	438
40-49	358	355
Total Tested	1223	976
Total Passing	921	660
Total Not Passing	302	316
Pass Percentage	76%	68%



of passing scores 30 points or better on the Cooper Scale by age groups. (Note: No females over 40 tested)

<u>Totals Tested</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>
Age 20-29	218	189
30-39	670	391
40-49	390	387
Total Tested	1278	967
Total Passing	561	323
Total Not Passing	717	644
Pass Percentage	44%	33%