

BERG BALANCE SCALE

7-Item Short Form Version

PATIENT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

RATER: _____

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS Please demonstrate each task and/or give instructions as written. When scoring, please record the lowest response category that applies for each item.

In most items, the subject is asked to maintain a given position for a specific time. Progressively more points are deducted if the time or distance requirements are not met, if the subject's performance warrants supervision, or if the subject touches an external support or receives assistance from the examiner. Subjects should understand that they must maintain their balance while attempting the tasks. The choices of which leg to stand on or how far to reach are left to the subject. Poor judgment will adversely influence the performance and the scoring.

Equipment required for testing are a stopwatch or watch with a second hand, and a ruler or other indicator of 2, 5 and 10 inches (5, 12 and 25 cm). Chairs used during testing should be of reasonable height.

REFERENCES

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Berg K, Maki B, Williams JI, Holliday P, Wood-Dauphinee S: A comparison of clinical and laboratory measures of postural balance in an elderly population. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil*, 73: 1073-1083, 1992.

Berg K, Wood-Dauphinee S, Williams JI, Maki, B: Measuring balance in the elderly: Validation of an instrument. *Can. J. Pub. Health*, July/August supplement 2:S7-11, 1992.

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Chou C, Chien C, Hsueh I, et al. Developing a short form of the Berg Balance Scale for people with stroke. *Phys Ther*. 2006;86:195-204.

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1. SITTING TO STANDING

INSTRUCTIONS: Please stand up. Try not to use your hands for support.

- (4) Able to stand without using hands and stabilize independently
- (2) Able to stand independently using hands
- (2) Able to stand using hands after several tries
- (2) Needs minimal aid to stand or to stabilize
- (0) Needs moderate or maximal assist to stand

2. STANDING UNSUPPORTED WITH EYES CLOSED

INSTRUCTIONS: Please close your eyes and stand still for 10 seconds.

- (4) Able to stand 10 seconds safely
- (2) Able to stand 10 seconds with supervision
- (2) Able to stand 3 seconds
- (2) Unable to keep eyes closed 3 seconds but stays steady
- (0) Needs help to keep from falling

3. REACHING FORWARD WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARM WHILE STANDING

INSTRUCTIONS: Lift arm to 90 degrees. Stretch out your fingers and reach forward as far as you can. (Examiner places a ruler at end of fingertips when arm is at 90 degrees. Fingers should not touch the ruler while reaching forward. The recorded measure is the distance forward that the finger reaches while the subject is in the most forward lean position. When possible, ask subject to use both arms when reaching to avoid rotation of the trunk.)

- (4) Can reach forward confidently >25 cm (10 inches)
- (2) Can reach forward >12 cm safely (5 inches)
- (2) Can reach forward >5 cm safely (2 inches)
- (2) Reaches forward but needs supervision
- (0) Loses balance while trying/requires external support

4. PICK UP OBJECT FROM THE FLOOR FROM A STANDING POSITION

INSTRUCTIONS: Pick up the shoe/slipper which is placed in front of your feet.

- (4) Able to pick up slipper safely and easily
- (2) Able to pick up slipper but needs supervision
- (2) Unable to pick up but reaches 2-5cm (1-2 inches) from slipper & keeps balance independently
- (2) Unable to pick up & needs supervision while trying
- (0) Unable to try/needs assist to keep from losing balance or falling

5. TURNING TO LOOK BEHIND OVER LEFT AND RIGHT SHOULDERS WHILE STANDING

INSTRUCTIONS: Turn to look directly behind you over toward left shoulder. Repeat to the right. Examiner may pick an object to look at directly behind the subject to encourage a better twist turn.

- (4) Looks behind from both sides and weight shifts well
- (2) Looks behind one side only other side shows less weight shift
- (2) Turns sideways only but maintains balance
- (2) Needs supervision when turning
- (0) Needs assist to keep from losing balance or falling

6. STANDING UNSUPPORTED ONE FOOT IN FRONT

INSTRUCTIONS: (DEMONSTRATE TO SUBJECT) Place one foot directly in front of the other. If you feel that you cannot place your foot directly in front, try to step far enough ahead that the heel of your forward foot is ahead of the toes of the other foot. (To score 3 points, the length of the step should exceed the length of the other foot and the width of the stance should approximate the subject's normal stride width)

- (4) Able to place foot tandem independently and hold 30 seconds
- (2) Able to place foot ahead of other independently and hold 30 seconds
- (2) Able to take small step independently and hold 30 seconds
- (2) Needs help to step but can hold 15 seconds
- (0) Loses balance while stepping or standing

7. STANDING ON ONE LEG

INSTRUCTIONS: Stand on one leg as long as you can without holding.

- (4) Able to lift leg independently and hold >10 seconds
- (2) Able to lift leg independently and hold 5-10 seconds
- (2) Able to lift leg independently and hold = or >3 seconds
- (2) Tries to lift leg unable to hold 3 seconds but remains standing independently
- (0) Unable to try or needs assist to prevent fall

() TOTAL SCORE (Maximum = 28)

A score below 23 is considered at risk for falling.