

SITTING BALANCE SCALE (Medley, A. & Thompson, M 2011)

Note: All sitting items are performed with the patient sitting unsupported on a surface with both feet in weight bearing unless otherwise indicated.

Equipment needed: 12-inch ruler, stopwatch (items 1, 2, and 6), pen (items 4 and 7), slipper (items 5 and 11), *Physician's Desk Reference* or other item 3 to 3.5 inches thick (item 6), 2 lb cuff weight (item 3), 15" x 15" x 5" piece of foam, (item 11); clipboard (item 9).

What surface the patient is sitting on?

folding chair, wheelchair, mat, other _____

1. Sitting unsupported (eyes open)

Instructions: Please sit with your arms folded for

60 seconds. (Examiner must make sure the patient's feet are in weight bearing)

- () 4 Able to sit safely and securely 60 seconds
- () 3 Able to sit 60 seconds under supervision
- () 2 Able to sit 30 seconds
- () 1 Able to sit 10 seconds
- () 0 Unable to sit without support 10 seconds

2. Sitting unsupported with eyes closed

Instructions: Please sit with your eyes closed for

30 seconds. (Examiner must make sure the patient's feet are in weight bearing).

- () 4 Able to sit safely and securely 30 seconds
- () 3 Able to sit 30 seconds under supervision
- () 2 Able to sit 10 seconds
- () 1 Able to sit 3 seconds
- () 0 Unable to sit without support 3 seconds

3. Sitting unsupported with arms as levers

Instructions: Please lift this cuff weight out in front of you with your arm straight. (Starting position for all scores is with patients' hands in their lap. Examiner must ensure that the arm moves to at least 90° of shoulder flexion for a score of 4 or 3. If the patient has hemiplegia, test using the unaffected arm.)

- () 4 Able to sit while lifting a 2-lb cuff weight at 90° shoulder flexion
- () 3 Able to sit while lifting one arm to 90° flexion
- () 2 Able to sit with hands folded across chest
- () 1 Able to sit with hands in lap
- () 0 Able to sit with hands at side on the mat

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4. Reaching forward with outstretched arm while sitting

Instructions: Reach forward and touch this pen. (Ask patient to make a fist and extend arm forward to shoulder height (approximately 90°). Place a 12-inch ruler touching patient's fist in line with patient's arm. Hold up a pen 12 inches from patient's fist. Ask the patient to try to touch the pen with knuckles without losing balance. Note distance reached.

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

5. Pick up an object from the floor while sitting un- supported

Instructions: Pick up the slipper. (Examiner should place the slipper on the floor 3 inches in front of the patient's toes.)

- () 4 Able to pick up slipper without losing balance
- () 3 Able to pick up slipper but needs supervision for balance
- () 2 Unable to pick up slipper but reaches 1-2 inches from slipper and keeps balance independently
- () 1 Unable to pick up and needs supervision while trying
- () 0 Unable to try/needs assistance to keep from losing balance or falling

6. Placing alternate foot on a *Physician's Desk Reference* (PDR) while sitting unsupported

Instructions: Place each foot alternately on this book four times. (Place a PDR or other item that is 3 to 3½ inches high, 6 inches in front of the toes. Have patient alternately touch feet to the top of the PDR. Patient should continue until each foot has touched the PDR four times. Patients with hemiplegia or unilateral amputation may perform the task with their uninvolved leg.)

- () 4 Able to sit independently and safely complete 8 steps in 20 seconds
- () 3 Able to sit independently and completes 8 steps > 20 seconds
- () 2 Able to complete 4 steps without aid with supervision
- () 1 Able to complete >2 steps needs minimal assistance
- () 0 Needs assistance to keep from falling/ unable to try

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7. Reaching laterally with outstretched arm while sitting unsupported

Instructions: Reach to the side and touch this pen. (Ask patient to make a fist and extend arm out to the side, laterally, to shoulder height approximately 90°. Place a 12-inch ruler touching the patient's fist in line with patient's arm. Hold up a pen 12 inches from patient's fist. Ask patient to try to touch the pen with knuckles without losing balance. Note distance reached. If the patient is in a wheelchair, remove the arms of the chair.)

- () 4 Can reach laterally confidently >10 inches
- () 3 Can reach laterally >5 inches
- () 2 Can reach laterally >2 inches
- () 1 Reaches laterally but needs supervision
- () 0 Loses balance while trying/ requires external support

8. Turning to look behind over left and right shoulders while sitting

Instructions: Turn to look directly behind you over your left shoulder. Repeat to the right. (Patient is seated with hands in lap. Examiner may identify an object directly behind the patient to encourage a complete turn of the trunk.)

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

9. Lateral bend to elbow in sitting

Instructions: While facing forward, bend side- ways to your left until your forearm touches the clipboard and return to an upright position. Repeat to the right. (Place a clipboard level with the sitting surface. Patients with hemiplegia should perform this task to both sides.)

- () 4 Able to smoothly perform the motion bilaterally and return to midline
- () 3 Able to perform 2/3 of the motion or difficulty returning to midline on one or both sides
- () 2 Able to perform 1/3 of the motion or only performs unilaterally
- () 1 Initiates motion, but requires assistance to go further
- () 0 Unable to complete motion

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10. Sit to stand transfers

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

- () 4 Able to transfer safely with the minor use of hands
- () 3 Able to transfer safely with verbal cuing and/or supervision
- () 2 Able to transfer with assistance x 1
- () 1 Able to transfer with assistance x 2
- () 0 Unable to transfer or needs a lift

Note: On the following items have the patient sit unsupported on a 15" x 15" x 5" piece of foam to further evaluate sitting balance. Density should be such that when the patient sits on the foam, their balance is challenged but the foam should not be compressed all the way to the chair seat. The patient's feet should remain in weight bearing.

11. Pick up an object from the floor while sitting unsupported on foam

Instructions: Pick up the slipper that is placed 3 inches in front of your toes. (Examiner should place the slipper on the floor 3 inches in front of the patient's toes.)

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

Score _____/44

Interpretation:

43.17/44 healthy community dwelling older adults

34.41/44 those with pathologies requiring home health or nursing home residents

Date	Name	Score