



Checklist for Clinical Examination of the Shoulder and Arm

History

Ask questions pertaining to the following:

- ☐ Chief complaint
- ☐ Mechanism of injury
- ☐ Unusual sounds or sensations
- ☐ Type and location of pain or symptoms
- ☐ Previous injury
- ☐ Previous injury to opposite extremity for bilateral comparison

If chronic, ascertain the following:

- ☐ Duration of onset
- ☐ Aggravating and easing activities
- ☐ Training history

Observation

- ☐ Visible facial expressions of pain
- ☐ Swelling, deformity, abnormal contours, or discoloration
- ☐ Does athlete let the arm hang and swing, or does the athlete hold or splint the arm?
- ☐ Overall position, posture, and alignment (anterior, lateral, and posterior)
- ☐ Muscle development bilaterally—are there areas of muscular atrophy?
- ☐ Bilateral comparison of acromions, SC joints, inferior border of scapula, and scapular spine
- ☐ Scapular position (inferior tip of scapula is level with T7, superior medial ridge is at T2)

Differential Diagnosis

- ☐ Clear cervical region with overpressure tests—quadrant position
- ☐ Eliminate thoracic outlet and brachial plexus pathologies.

Range of Motion

- ☐ Active ROM for shoulder flexion and extension, abduction and adduction, horizontal adduction and abduction, and medial and lateral rotation
- ☐ Observe scapular elevation and depression, retraction and protraction, and upward and downward rotation with active motions listed previously.
- ☐ Passive ROM for shoulder motions listed
- ☐ Passive ROM for scapular motions listed
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Strength Tests

- ☐ Perform manual resistance against the same motions as in active ROM.
- ☐ Check bilaterally and note any pain or weaknesses.

Neurovascular Tests

- ☐ Sensory
- ☐ Motor
- ☐ Reflex
- ☐ Distal pulse
- ☐ Thoracic outlet tests for neurovascular compromise

Special Tests

- ☐ Glenohumeral stability tests
- ☐ AC and SC stability tests
- ☐ Rotator cuff pathology and impingement tests
- ☐ Labrum pathology tests
- ☐ Biceps tests (Speed's and Yergason's)
- ☐ Pectoralis major contraction test

Joint Mobility (as appropriate)

Note capsular restriction and end feel of the following:

- ☐ Glenohumeral joint
- ☐ Scapulothoracic joint
- ☐ Clavicular joint

Palpation

Bilaterally palpate for pain, tenderness, and deformity over the following:

- ☐ SC joint, clavicle, AC joint, acromion, coracoid process, subacromial bursa, greater tuberosity, lesser tuberosity, bicipital groove
- ☐ Scapular spine
- ☐ Rotator cuff
- ☐ Sternocleidomastoid, pectoralis
- ☐ Biceps tendon and muscle
- ☐ Trapezius, rhomboid, latissimus dorsi, serratus anterior
- ☐ Axillary structures

Functional Tests