



Checklist for Acute Examination of Cervical and Upper Thoracic Spine

History

- ☐ Mechanism of injury
- ☐ Unusual sensations experienced at time of injury and currently
- ☐ Symptoms of headache, dizziness, or light-headedness
- ☐ Previous injury

Observation

- ☐ Presence of cervical lordosis
- ☐ Spasm, swelling, discoloration
- ☐ Bilateral asymmetry
- ☐ Evidence of pain or restricted movement
- ☐ Position of head

Palpation

- ☐ Evidence of bony tenderness
- ☐ Evidence of muscle tenderness, spasm, trigger point
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Special Tests

- ☐ Valsalva maneuver
- ☐ Cervical compression test
- ☐ Shoulder depression test
- ☐ Nerve root compression relief test
- ☐ Cervical distraction relief test

Range of Motion

- ☐ Active ROM: cervical flexion, extension, lateral flexion, and rotation
- ☐ Passive ROM: end-range cervical flexion, extension, lateral flexion, and rotation

Strength Tests

- ☐ Manual resistance to cervical flexion, extension, rotation, and lateral flexion

Neurological Tests

- ☐ Dermatome (C1-C4; C5-T1)
- ☐ Myotome (C5-T1)
- ☐ Reflex (biceps, brachioradialis, triceps)

Functional Tests

- ☐ Basic skills (e.g., tie shoes with eyes closed)
- ☐ Activity or sport-specific tasks
- ☐ Upper-extremity movements
- ☐ Note ease of cervical movement with trunk and upper-extremity movement.