



Checklist for Clinical Examination of the Wrist and Hand

History

Ask questions pertaining to the following:

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

If chronic, ascertain the following:

- ☐ Aggravating and easing activities
- ☐ Training and daily activity history (repetitive stresses)
- ☐ Activity restrictions
- ☐ Treatment, if any

Observation

- ☐ Visible facial expressions of pain
- ☐ Swelling, deformity, abnormal contours, or discoloration
- ☐ Skin creases, interruption, coloration, and scars
- ☐ Finger alignment, nail appearance and coloration
- ☐ Guarding of the wrist and hand
- ☐ Muscle development—areas of muscular atrophy
- ☐ Presence of localized nodules
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Differential Diagnosis

- ☐ Rule out the cervical region with overpressure tests in straight planes and quadrant positions.
- ☐ Rule out the shoulder region with passive overpressures in all ranges.
- ☐ Rule out the elbow region with passive overpressures in all ranges.
- ☐ Perform a complete upper-quarter neurological screen if referred pain is noted.

Range of Motion

- ☐ Active ROM for forearm pronation and supination
- ☐ Active ROM for wrist flexion and extension, and radial and ulnar deviation
- ☐ Active ROM for MP flexion, extension, abduction, and adduction
- ☐ Active ROM for IP flexion and extension
- ☐ Active ROM for thumb flexion, extension, abduction, adduction, and circumduction
- ☐ Presence of capsular patterns
- ☐ Passive ROM for the same motions as for active ROM
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Strength Tests

- ☐ Check grip strength and pinch strength.
- ☐ Perform manual resistance against the same motions as in active ROM.
- ☐ Check bilaterally and note any pain or weakness.
- ☐ Perform instrumented strength tests.

Neurological Tests

- ☐ Sensory and motor for ulnar, radial, and median nerves
- ☐ Two-point discrimination test

Special Tests

- ☐ Neurovascular compromise (Tinel's, Allen, Phalen's, carpal compression, two-point discrimination)
- ☐ Fractures (compression, vibration)
- ☐ Tendon and muscle (flexor and extensor tendon avulsion)
- ☐ Ligament stress tests for joint laxity and contractures (collateral, Reagan's, glide, Bunnel-Littler, retinacular)
- ☐ Tenosynovitis (Finkelstein, trigger finger)

Joint Mobility Examination

Note capsular restriction and end feel in the following:

- ☐ Radiocarpal distraction and glide
- ☐ Carpometacarpal distraction and glide
- ☐ Metacarpophalangeal and interphalangeal distraction and glide

Palpation

Bilaterally palpate for pain, tenderness, and deformity from proximal to distal over the following:

- ☐ Distal radius and ulna, Lister's tubercle, extensor tendons
- ☐ Carpal bones, anatomical snuffbox, tendon borders
- ☐ Flexor tendons, tunnel of Guyon
- ☐ Carpometacarpal joints, metacarpals (base, shaft, head), metacarpophalangeal joints
- ☐ Phalanges, proximal and distal interphalangeal joints
- ☐ Check radial pulse and observe for nail bed blanching.

Functional Tests