



Checklist for Acute Examination of the Wrist and Hand

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

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—are there areas of muscular atrophy?
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

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, and 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 look for nail bed blanching.

Special Tests

- ☐ Neurovascular compromise (Tinel's sign, Allen test)
- ☐ Fractures (compression, vibration)
- ☐ Tendon and muscle tears (flexor and extensor tendon avulsion)
- ☐ Ligament stress tests (collateral, Reagan's, and glide tests)

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
- ☐ Passive ROM for the same motions as for active ROM
- ☐ Bilateral comparison

Strength Tests

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

Neurological Tests

- ☐ Sensory and motor for radial, ulnar, and median nerve distributions

Functional Tests