

# The Elderly Mobility Scale:



Image Source: Unsplash

## 15 Essential Tests for Healthy Aging

As we age, our mobility can become limited, leading to a decrease in independence and quality of life. That's why it's essential to monitor and maintain mobility in the elderly. The Elderly Mobility Scale (EMS) is a tool that can assess and track mobility in seniors. In this article, I will discuss the importance of mobility in the elderly, the 15 tests included in the EMS, and how to use the EMS scale calculator.

### Importance of Mobility in the Elderly

Mobility is crucial for the elderly to maintain their independence, perform daily activities, and reduce the risk of falls. Limited mobility can lead to decreased physical activity, muscle weakness, and loss of balance, which can increase the risk of falls and injuries. Falls are the leading cause of injury among the elderly, and they can have severe consequences, including hospitalisation, disability, and even death.

That's why it's essential to promote mobility in the elderly through regular exercise, physical therapy, and mobility assessments. The EMS is a tool that can assess mobility in the elderly and identify areas that need improvement. By monitoring and improving mobility, the elderly can maintain their independence, reduce the risk of falls, and improve their quality of life.

## **Understanding the 15 Tests in the EMS**

The EMS is a tool that consists of 15 tests that assess mobility in the elderly. These tests are divided into five categories: upper body strength and flexibility, lower body strength and flexibility, balance and coordination, gait and walking, and functional reach. Let's take a closer look at each category and the tests included in them.

### **Upper Body Strength and Flexibility**

This category includes tests that assess the strength and flexibility of the upper body. These tests include:

- **Shoulder Flexion:** The request is for the senior to raise their arm forward and upward as far as possible.
- **Shoulder Abduction:** The request is for the senior to raise their arm sideways as far as possible.
- **Elbow Flexion:** The request is for the senior to bend their arm at the elbow and touch their shoulder with their hand.
- **Elbow Extension:** The request is for the senior to straighten their arm at the elbow.
- **Wrist Extension:** The request is for the senior to lift their hand upward as far as possible.
- **Wrist Flexion:** The request is for the senior to bend their hand downward as far as possible.

### **Lower Body Strength and Flexibility**

This category includes tests that assess the strength and flexibility of the lower body. These tests include:

- **Hip Flexion:** The request is for the senior to lift their leg as far as possible while keeping it straight.
- **Hip Extension:** The request is for the senior to move their leg backward as far as possible while keeping it straight.
- **Knee Flexion:** The request is for the senior to bend their leg at the knee and bring their heel towards their buttock.

- Knee Extension: The request is for the senior to straighten their leg at the knee.
- Ankle Extension: The request is for the senior to lift their foot upward as far as possible.
- Ankle Flexion: The request is for the senior to bend their foot downward as far as possible.

## **Balance and Coordination**

This category includes tests that assess balance and coordination. These tests include:

- One Leg Stand: The request is for the senior to stand on one leg for as long as possible.
- Tandem Stand: The request is for the senior to stand with one foot in front of the other for as long as possible.
- Romberg Test: The request is for the senior to stand with their feet together and close their eyes for as long as possible.

## **Gait and Walking**

This category includes tests that assess gait and walking. These tests include:

- Timed Up and Go: The request is for the senior to rise from the chair, proceed three meters forward, pivot, return to the chair, and resume sitting.
- Six-Minute Walk: The request is for the senior to walk as far as possible in six minutes.
- Two-Minute Step: The request is for the senior to step up and down a step as many times as possible in two minutes.

## **Functional Reach**

This category includes tests that assess functional reach. These tests include:

- Forward Reach: The request is for the senior to reach forward as far as possible while standing.
- Lateral Reach: The request is for the senior to reach to the side as far as possible while standing.

## **How to Use the EMS Scale Calculator**

The EMS can be calculated using a scale calculator. The scale calculator assigns a score to each test based on the senior's performance. The scores are then added up to determine the senior's overall EMS score. The EMS score ranges from 0 to 15, with a higher score indicating better mobility.

To use the EMS scale calculator, you will need to administer the 15 tests to the senior and record their performance. Once you have recorded their performance, you can enter the scores into the scale calculator, which will then calculate their EMS score.

## **Interpretation of EMS Results**

The EMS score can be used to interpret the senior's mobility level. A score of 15 indicates excellent mobility, while a score of 0 indicates severe mobility limitations. A score of 12 or higher is considered normal, while a score of 9 or lower indicates a need for further evaluation and intervention.

## **Benefits of Using the EMS for Healthy Aging**

The EMS can be a valuable tool for promoting healthy aging. By monitoring and improving mobility, seniors can maintain their independence, reduce the risk of falls, and improve their quality of life. The EMS can also be used to track the progress of mobility interventions and identify areas that need further improvement.

## **Conclusion**

The EMS is a valuable tool for assessing and monitoring mobility in the elderly. The 15 tests included in the EMS can assess upper and lower body strength and flexibility, balance and coordination, gait and walking, and functional reach. The EMS scale calculator can be used to calculate the senior's EMS score, which can be used to interpret their mobility level. By promoting mobility through regular exercise, physical therapy, and mobility assessments, seniors can maintain their independence, reduce the risk of falls, and improve their quality of life.

Author: Debbie Nicholson, Canterbury Street, Alexanders Holiday Park, Picton, Marlborough 7220, New Zealand, April 2023