Berg Balance Scale

Name:_____   **Date of Test:** _____ .

1. **Sit to Stand**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Please stand up. Try not to use your hands for support"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    - ( ) 0: Needs moderate or maximal assistance to stand
    - ( ) 1: Needs minimal assistance to stand or to stabilize
    - ( ) 2: Able to stand using hands after several tries
    - ( ) 3: Able to stand independently using hands
    - ( ) 4: Able to stand with no hands and stabilize independently

2. **Standing unsupported**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Please stand for 2 minutes without holding onto anything"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    - ( ) 0: Unable to stand 30 seconds unassisted
    - ( ) 1: Needs several tries to stand 30 seconds unsupported
    - ( ) 2: Able to stand 30 seconds unsupported
    - ( ) 3: Able to stand 2 minutes without supervision
    - ( ) 4: Able to stand safely for 2 minutes

    If person is able to stand 2 minutes safely, score full points for sitting unsupported (item 3). Proceed to item 4.

3. **Sitting with back unsupported with feet on floor or on a stool**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Sit with arms folded for 2 minutes"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    - ( ) 0: Unable to sit without support for 10 seconds
    - ( ) 1: Able to sit for 10 seconds
    - ( ) 2: Able to sit for 30 seconds
    - ( ) 3: Able to sit for 2 minutes under supervision
    - ( ) 4: Able to sit safely and securely for 2 minutes

4. **Stand to sit**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Please sit down"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    - ( ) 0: Needs assistance to sit
    - ( ) 1: Sits independently but had uncontrolled descent
    - ( ) 2: Uses back of legs against chair to control descent
    - ( ) 3: Controls descent by using hands
    - ( ) 4: Sits safely with minimal use of hands

5. **Transfers**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Please move from chair to chair and back again" (Person moves one way toward a seat with armrests and one way toward a seat without armrests) Arrange chairs for pivot transfer
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    - ( ) 0: Needs two people to assist or supervise to be safe
    - ( ) 1: Needs one person to assist
    - ( ) 2: Able to transfer with verbal cueing and/or supervision

Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging
from research to action ●●●

( ) 3: Able to transfer safely with definite use of hands
( ) 4: Able to transfer safely with minor use of hands

6. ***Standing unsupported with eyes closed**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Close your eyes and stand still for 10 seconds"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    ( ) 0: Needs help to keep from falling
    ( ) 1: Unable to keep eyes closed for 3 seconds but remains steady
    ( ) 2: Able to stand for 3 seconds
    ( ) 3: Able to stand for 10 seconds without supervision
    ( ) 4: Able to stand for 10 seconds safely

7. ***Stand unsupported with feet together**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Place your feet together and stand without holding on to anything"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
    ( ) 0: Needs help to attain position and unable to hold for 15 seconds
    ( ) 1: Needs help to attain position but able to stand for 15 seconds with feet together
    ( ) 2: Able to place feet together independently but unable to hold for 30 seconds
    ( ) 3: Able to place feet together independently and stand for 1 minute without supervision
    ( ) 4: Able to place feet together independently and stand for 1 minute safely

The following items are to be performed while standing unsupported

8. ***Reaching forward with outstretched arm**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Lift you arm to 90°. Stretch out your fingers and reach forward as far as you can" (Examiner places a ruler and end of fingertips when arm is at 90°. Fingers should not touch the ruler while reaching forward. The recorded measure is the distance toward that the fingers reach while the person is in the most forward lean position.)
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies.
    ( ) 0: Needs help to keep from falling
    ( ) 1: Reaches forward but needs supervision
    ( ) 2: Can reach forward more than 2 inches safely
    ( ) 3: Can reach forward more than 5 inches safely
    ( ) 4: Can reach forward confidently more than 10 inches

9. ***Pick up object from the floor from a standing position**
    - ❖ Instructions: "Please pick up the shoe/slipper that is placed in front of your feet"
    - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category
    ( ) 0: Unable to try/needs assistance to keep from losing balance or falling
    ( ) 1: Unable to pick up shoe and needs supervision while trying
    ( ) 2: Unable to pick up shoe but comes within 1-2 inches and maintains balance independently
    ( ) 3: Able to pick up show but needs supervision
    ( ) 4: Able to pick up show safely and easily

Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging
from research to action ● ● ●

10. ***Turn to look behind over left and right shoulders while standing**
   - ❖ Instructions: "Turn you upper body to look directly over your left shoulder. Now try turning to look over you right shoulder"
   - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
   - ( ) 0: Needs assistance to keep from falling
   - ( ) 1: Needs supervision when turning
   - ( ) 2: Turns sideways only but maintains balance
   - ( ) 3: Looks behind one side only; other side shows less weight shift
   - ( ) 4: Looks behind from both sides and weight shifts well

11. ***Turn 360°**
   - ❖ Instructions: "Turn completely in a full circle. Pause, then turn in a full circle in the other direction"
   - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
   - ( ) 0: Needs assistance while turning
   - ( ) 1: Needs close supervision or verbal cueing
   - ( ) 2: Able to turn 360° safely but slowly
   - ( ) 3: Able to turn 360° safely to one side only in less than 4 seconds
   - ( ) 4: Able to turn 360° in less than 4 seconds to each side

12. ***Place alternate foot on bench or stool while standing unsupported**
   - ❖ Instructions: "Place each foot alternately on the bench (or stool). Continue until each foot has touched the bench (or stool) four times". (Recommended use of 6-inch-high-bench.)
   - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies.
   - ( ) 0: Needs assistance to keep from falling/unable to try
   - ( ) 1: Able to complete fewer than two steps; needs minimal assistance
   - ( ) 2: Able to complete four steps without assistance but with supervision
   - ( ) 3: Able to stand independently and complete eight steps in more than 20 seconds
   - ( ) 4: Able to stand independently and safely and complete eight steps in less than 20 seconds

13. ***Stand unsupported with one foot in front**
   - ❖ Instructions: "Place one foot directly in front of the other. If you feel that you can't place your foot directly in front, try to step far enough ahead that the heel of your forward foot is ahead of the toes of the other foot" (Demonstrate this test item)
   - ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
   - ( ) 0: Loses balance while stepping or standing
   - ( ) 1: Needs help to step but can hold for 15 seconds
   - ( ) 2: Able to take small step independently and hold for 30 seconds
   - ( ) 3: Able to place one foot ahead of the other independently and hold for 30 seconds
   - ( ) 4: Able to place feet in tandem position independently and hold for 30 seconds

14. *Standing on one leg

- ❖ Instructions: "Please stand on one leg as long as you can without holding onto anything"
- ❖ Grading: Please mark the lowest category that applies
- ( ) 0: Unable to try or needs assistance to prevent fall
- ( ) 1: Tries to lift leg, unable to hold 3 seconds but remains standing independently
- ( ) 2: Able to lift leg independently and hold up to 3 seconds
- ( ) 3: Able to lift leg independently and holds for 5 to 10 seconds
- ( ) 4: Able to lift leg independently and hold more than 10 seconds

Total Score   /56

Note: Perform only items 6 thorough 14 (*) in the modified version of the scale. Maximum score for modified version is 36 points.

Canadian Centre for
Activity and Aging
from research to action ● ● ●

Interpretation of Individual Test Item Results on the Berg Balance Scale (BBS)

Item	Possible Impairment	Recommended Exercise
1. Sit to Stand	1. Lower and/or upper body weakness	Wall sits; UB and LB exercises with resistance (quadriceps, biceps/triceps, hip abductors/adductors)
	2. Poor dynamic COG control	Seated/standing balance activities emphasizing forward weight shifts
	3. Abnormal weight distribution	Standing balance activities with eyes closed (controlled sway in A-P and lateral directions
2. Stand for 2 minutes	1. Poor gaze stabilization	Teach gaze fixation and stabilization techniques
	2. Lower body weakness	Wall sits; LB exercises with resistance
	3. Abnormal weight distribution in standing	COG standing balance activities
3. Sit for 2 minutes	1. Poor trunk stabilization and/or UB weakness	UB exercises with resistance (own body); seated balance activities on compliant surfaces
	2. Abnormal perception of true vertical	Standing against wall with eyes closed; somatosensory cues
4. Stand to sit	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Seated/standing balance activities emphasizing backward weight shifts
	2. Lower and/or upper body weakness	UB and LB exercises with resistance (own body/resistance band; emphasize eccentric component)
	3. Poor trunk flexibility	Flexibility exercises emphasizing trunk rotation/flexion; seated and standing
5. Transfer (chair to chair)	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Seated/standing balance activities emphasizing multi-directional weight shifts
	2. Lower and/or upper body weakness	UB and LB exercises with resistance
6. Stand with eyes closed (10 sec)	1. Poor use of somatosensory input; visual dependency and/or fear of falling	Seated/standing balance activities with eyes closed. Verbally emphasizing use of surface cues
	2. Lower body weakness	Wall sits; LB exercises with resistance
7. Stand with feet together (1 min)	1. Poor COG control	Standing balance activities with reduced BOS
	2. Weak hip abductors/adductors	Lateral leg raises/weight shifts against resistance
8. Standing forward reach	1. Poor dynamic COG control (reduced limits of stability	Seated/standing COG activities emphasizing leaning away from and back to midline
	2. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance (body/resistance band); emphasize dorsiflexors; gastrocnemius /soleus muscles

Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging
from research to action ● ● ●

	3. Reduced ankle ROM	Flexibility exercises (emphasize dorsiflexion)
9. Pick up object	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Seated/standing COG activities emphasizing leaning away from and back to midline
	2. Poor upper and lower body flexibility	Selected exercises to improve UB and LB flexion
	3. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance (body/resistance band)
	4. Vestibular impairment	Head and eye movements: habituation exercises
10. Turn to look behind	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Standing weight shifts in lateral direction
	2. Poor neck and/or trunk flexibility	Selected exercises emphasizing rotation of neck, shoulders, and hips
	3. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance; ball movement exercises in standing position
11. Turn in a circle	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Standing weight transfer activities; gait pattern enhancement (turns, directional changes)
	2. Possible Vestibular impairment (e.g., dizziness)	Head and eye movement coordination exercises
	3. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance emphasize hip and knee
12. Dynamic toe touch	1. Poor dynamic COG control	Standing weight shifts in lateral/A-P directions
	2. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance; emphasize hip and knee flexion; hip abduction/adduction
13. Tandem stance	1. Poor static and dynamic COG control	Standing A-P weight shifts and transfers; reduced BOS activities
	2. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance (body/resistance band); emphasize hip abductors/adductors
	3. Poor gaze stabilization	Practice focusing on visual targets in front of and at head height during standing and moving activities
14. Stand on one leg	1. Poor static and dynamic COG control	Standing 1-p weight shifts and transfers; reduced BOS activities
	2. Lower body weakness	LB exercises with resistance (body/resistance band) emphasize hip abductors/adductors
	3. Poor gaze stabilization	Practice focusing on visual targets during standing and moving activities

Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging
from research to action ●●●