

Appendix F

Back Scratch Test

Purpose

The Back Scratch Test measures how close the hands can be brought together behind the back, so provides an indication of the general shoulder range of motion, and the upper body and shoulder flexibility. It is associated with lifestyle activities such as getting dressed, reaching for objects and putting on a car seat belt.

Required equipment

- ruler or a yardstick or a tape measure

Procedure

- Perform this test in the standing position.
- Place one hand behind the head and back over the shoulder, and reach as far as possible down the middle of your back, your palm touching your body and the fingers pointing downwards.
- Place the other arm behind your back, palm facing outward and fingers pointing upward and reach up as far as possible, attempting to touch or overlap the middle fingers of both hands.
- An assistant is required to direct you so that the fingers are aligned, and to measure the distance between the tips of the middle fingers.
- If the fingertips touch then the score is zero. If they do not touch, the assistant should measure the distance between the finger tips (a negative score), if they overlap, then measure by how much (a positive score). Practice two times with the arms in opposite positions to determine the preferred side for reaching over the shoulder, and then test two times. Record the best score to the nearest centimeter.

Safety issues

Stop the test if you experience pain.