

Musculoskeletal Examination

GALS screen

The GALS screen is a quick screening examination to pick up problems in the musculoskeletal system. You are checking for changes in **appearance** (swelling, deformity, abnormal posture) and **movement** (restricted movement, pain – look at patient's face). Remember to:

- Get the patient to copy you.
- Compare one side with the other.

Introduction

Introduce yourself, gain permission, check position, expose appropriate area and look around bed and at the patient from a distance.

The GALS also contains 3 screening questions which improve sensitivity:

- *Do you have and pain, stiffness or swelling?*
- *Do you have difficulty with the stairs?*
- *Do you have difficulty with washing or dressing yourself?*

Gait

Look for smoothness and symmetry of movement.

Gross abnormalities, eg. kyphosis, scoliosis.

Specific gait problems, eg. antalgic gait.

Arms

Look at dorsum of hands for swelling, deformity, muscle wasting.

Patient turns hands over. Look again.

Power and precision grips.

Squeeze over metacarpophalangeal joints.

Full extension and flexion at elbow.

Abduction and external rotation of shoulder.

Legs

Look at legs for muscle wasting and asymmetry.

Look at feet for deformities and swelling.

Flexion and extension of knees, feel for crepitus.

Internal rotation of hips.

Ankle movements (dorsi/plantar flexion, inversion, eversion)

Squeeze over metatarsophalangeal joints.

Spine

Lateral flexion of neck.

Place fingers on adjacent lumbar vertebrae to check for movement as patient touches toes.