

Clinical Task Instruction

DELEGATED TASK

D-MT04: Step test

Scope and objectives of clinical task

This CTI will enable the Allied Health Assistant (AHA) to:

- safely and effectively administer the step test and record the results.

VERSION CONTROL

Version: 1.0

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The CTI reflects best practice and agreed process for conduct of the task at the time of approval and should not be altered. Feedback, including proposed amendments to this published document, should be directed to AHPOQ at: allied_health_advisory@health.qld.gov.au.

This CTI should be used under a delegation framework implemented at the work unit level. The framework is available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac>

Please check <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions.asp> for the latest version of this CTI.

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Requisite training, knowledge, skills and experience

Training

- Completion of CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
- Mandatory training requirements relevant to Queensland Health/Hospital and Health Service (HHS) clinical roles are assumed knowledge for this CTI.
- Completion of the following Queensland Health allied health assistant training modules (or corresponding units of competency in HLT43015 Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance) or equivalent work-based learning:

- Assist with physiotherapy treatments and interventions.

Access the module/s at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/ahassist-modules>

Clinical knowledge

- The following content knowledge is required by an AHA delivering this task:
 - understand the purpose of the step test including the standard testing process, scoring and documentation requirements.
 - describe the basic elements of standing balance including single leg stand for stepping up and down, and common limitations to standing balance and stepping e.g. proprioception, pain, co-ordination and weakness.
- The knowledge requirements will be met by the following activities:
 - completing the training program/s (listed above).
 - reviewing the Learning resource.
 - receiving instruction from an allied health professional in the training phase.

Skills or experience

- The following skills or experience are not identified in the task procedure but support the safe and effective performance of the task and are required by an AHA delivering this task:
 - experience and confidence in facilitating client movement and positioning.

Safety & quality

Client

- The AHA will apply CTI D-WTS01 When to stop at all times.
- In addition, the following potential risks and precautions have been identified for this clinical task and should be monitored carefully by the AHA during the task:
 - as this test is routinely used as an outcome measure for clients who have balance problems and are at risk of falls, standby assistance of the client is required at all times.

Equipment, aids and appliances

- If footwear is worn during the task, it should be appropriate i.e. enclosed, well-fitting shoes with good traction.

- The delegating health professional will determine the need for a walk belt using information from the local manual handling screen. Inspect the walk belt and check the handles and Velcro® are intact. Walk belts should be fitted securely around the client's waist. If a suitably sized walk belt cannot be located, liaise with the delegating health professional prior to commencing the task.

Environment

- The test area needs to be suitable for the testing parameters including being an open space, free of hand holds (bars or furniture) and pedestrian traffic.

Performance of Clinical Task

1. Delegation instructions

- Receive the delegated task from the health professional.
- The delegating allied health professional should clearly identify parameters for delivering the clinical task to the specific client, including any variance from the usual task procedure and expected outcomes. This may include:
 - instructions on how the client should be positioned behind the block e.g. in a wheelchair with assistance to stand, mobilise with a walking frame and walk belt.
 - the client's ability to single leg stand including affected and unaffected limbs and assistance required e.g. prompting/verbal cues only, stand-by assistance, walk belt required.
 - the side the test is to be performed on; generally both sides are tested to allow comparison.
 - medical observations that require monitoring and expected limits for the client, such as pain.

2. Preparation

- One step 7.5 centimetre (cm) high, 41 cm wide, 30 cm deep
- Stop watch
- Walk belt, if part of the delegation instruction.

3. Introduce task and seek consent

- The AHA introduces him/herself to the client.
- The AHA checks three forms of client identification: full name, date of birth, **plus one** of the following: hospital unit record (UR) number, Medicare number, or address.
- The AHA describes the task to the client. For example:
 - "I have been asked to complete the Step Test with you. This will assess your ability to stand on one leg while stepping the other foot up and down on a block as fast and as safely as you can in 15 seconds".
- The AHA seeks informed consent according to the Queensland Health Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care, 2nd edition (2017).

4. Positioning

- The client's position during the task should be:
 - standing with feet parallel, positioned 5cm behind the step.
- The AHA's position during the task should be:
 - standing beside the client, generally on the stance side with one foot on the block to keep it stable/steady.

5. Task procedure

- Explain and demonstrate (where applicable) the task to the client.
- Check the client has understood the task and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- The task comprises the following steps.
 1. Position the client in standing, behind the step, as per the delegation instruction and using patient manual handling techniques.
 2. Instruct the client to place the nominated stepping foot completely onto the block and then return it fully back to the floor, repeating as fast as possible in 15 seconds, and not moving the standing foot. See Learning resource.
 3. Instruct the client that timing commences on "GO".
 4. Confirm the client is ready. On "GO" start the timer, counting the number of completed stepping cycles, observing the client's standing balance and monitoring for safety.
 5. At 15 seconds, stop the timer and record the number of completed steps.
 6. If required, repeat steps 2 to 5 on the other side.
- During the task:
 - provide feedback and correct errors in the performance of the task including:
 - the client is allowed several practice attempts at stepping the foot on and off the step. Instruct the client that only fully complete steps are included in the step count i.e. foot fully on step and back to floor. Confirm understanding as part of feedback prior to commencing the test. If the client is unable to stand unsupported, the test leg is scored as 0.
 - the client's foot/standing leg should be observed for movement during the test to indicate a loss of balance e.g. shuffling or stepping. If during the step test, the AHA observes movement of the standing leg or needs to provide hands-on support for safety, counting of stepping ceases and this becomes the final score.
 - monitor for adverse reactions and implement appropriate mitigation strategies as outlined in the Safety and quality section above including CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
- At the conclusion of the task:
 - encourage feedback from the client on the task.
 - provide summary feedback to client, emphasising positive aspects of performance e.g. the number of steps achieved on each leg.
 - ensure the client is comfortable and safe.

6. Document

- Document the outcomes of the task in the clinical record consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures. Include observation of client performance, expected outcomes that were and were not achieved, and difficulties encountered or symptoms reported by the client during the task.
- For this task, the following specific information should be presented:
 - observation of standing balance performance.
 - the test leg and number of steps achieved. The support or standing leg is the leg that is being scored. If standing on the left leg and the right leg steps up and down ten times, this is testing the left leg and the score recorded would be left leg standing = 10 steps.
 - if assistance was provided, the type of assistance, the number of steps achieved and time the test was ceased.

7. Report to the delegating health professional

- Provide comprehensive feedback to the health professional who delegated the task.

References and supporting documents

- Hill K.D, Bernhardt J, McGann A.M, Maltese D, Berkovits D (1996). A new test of dynamic standing balance for stroke patients: reliability, validity and comparison with healthy elderly. *Physiotherapy Canada* 48(4): 257-262. Doi.org/10.3138/ptc.48.4.257. Available at: <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/ptc.48.4.257>
- Queensland Health (2015). Clinical Task Instruction D-WTS01 When to stop. Available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions.asp>
- Queensland Health (2017). Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care (2nd edition). Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/143074/ic-guide.pdf

Assessment: performance criteria checklist

D-MT04: Step test

Name:

Position:

Work Unit:

Performance criteria	Knowledge acquired	Supervised task practice	Competency assessment
	Date and initials of supervising AHP	Date and initials of supervising AHP	Date and initials of supervising AHP
Demonstrates knowledge of fundamental concepts required to undertake the task.			
Obtains all required information from the delegating health professional, and seeks clarification if required, prior to accepting and proceeding with the delegated task.			
Completes preparation for the task including collecting step and stopwatch and checking the testing environment.			
Introduces self to the client and checks client identification.			
Describes the purpose of the delegated task and seeks informed consent.			
Positions self and client appropriately to complete the task and ensure safety.			
<p>Delivers the task effectively and safely as per delegated instructions and CTI procedure.</p> <p>a) Clearly explains the task, checking the client's understanding.</p> <p>b) Demonstrates the task to the client.</p> <p>c) Positions the client in standing, behind the step using patient manual handling principles.</p> <p>d) Instructs the client in required stepping performance and practices, providing feedback.</p> <p>e) Instructs the client that timing commences on "GO".</p> <p>f) Confirms the client is ready. Starts the stopwatch on saying "GO" and accurately counts the number of completed stepping cycles.</p> <p>g) At 15 seconds, stops the timer and records the number of completed steps.</p> <p>h) If required, repeats step test on the other side.</p> <p>i) During the task, maintains a safe clinical environment and manages risks appropriately.</p> <p>j) Provides feedback to the client on performance during and at completion of the task.</p>			
Documents the outcomes of the task in the clinical record, consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures.			
Provides accurate and comprehensive feedback to the delegating health professional.			

Comments:

Record of assessment competence:

Assessor name:	Assessor position:	Competence achieved: / /
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Scheduled review:

Review date: / /

Step test: Learning Resource

Required reading

- Queensland Health (n.d.) Compendium of clinical measures for community rehabilitation. Step Test (p32). Available at: <https://sites.temple.edu/rtwiseowls/files/2013/10/compendium-of-clinical-measures-for-community-rehabilitation.pdf>

Optional reading

- AbilityLab (2019). Step test. Available at: <https://www.sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures/step-test>