

CURRENT CONCEPTS IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPY: FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY EVALUATION

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Intent and Scope

The primary intent of this document is to provide guidelines for the proper design, administration, and interpretation of Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCEs), and to recommend qualification standards for Functional Capacity Examiners (Examiner) in order to promote clinical excellence, accountability, and consistency.

This document is not meant to be part of the Clinical Practice Guidelines of the Orthopaedic Section or to meet specific criteria to be included in the National Guideline Clearinghouse. This document is meant to serve as a primary resource for clinicians who perform and for consumers of functional capacity evaluations including physicians, adjusters, case managers, and vocational rehabilitation counselors practicing in workers compensation and disability management.

The recommendations contained in this document were developed by a panel with expertise in Functional Capacity Evaluation. The panel relied on available literature and clinical experience to arrive at these guidelines. The guidelines were reviewed by stakeholders including physical and occupational therapists and physicians who either have expertise in FCEs as researchers or examiners or who use the results of FCEs in the administration of workers' compensation or disability claims. The reviewers' comments were considered and incorporated into the guideline. The guideline is provided as current best practice as opposed to standards of practice. A Functional Capacity Examiner may deviate from these FCE guidelines when necessary and appropriate in the course of using independent and judicious clinical reasoning in an effort to provide the best information possible as to the abilities of the individual being evaluated in light of the questions posed by the referral source(s).

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the most current versions of the *APTA Standards of Practice for Physical Therapy*¹ and the *APTA Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, and the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*².

Examiners should have a full understanding of the limitations of FCEs which include, but are not limited to issues related to validity and reliability, standardization of testing and reporting, and the influence of an individual's behavior and symptoms on overall test results.

A Glossary of terms commonly used in FCEs has been developed as part of the guideline. Please refer to the Glossary for definitions of the terms used in this document.

Introduction

A Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) is a comprehensive performance-based medical assessment of an individual's physical and/or cognitive abilities to safely participate in work and other major life activities.²⁻⁵ The four major components of an FCE include³⁻⁶:

1. Intake interview
2. Medical records review
3. Physical examination
4. Content valid functional testing.

An FCE attempts to identify an individual's ability to safely participate in work and other major life activities. In instances where an individual has an illness, medical condition, or disorder that impairs his/her ability to safely participate in work or other major life activities, functional limitations may be present.

Residual functional capacity represents what an individual can still do despite functional limitations resulting from a medically determinable impairment(s) and impairment-related symptoms. In determining an individual's residual functional capacity, Functional Capacity Examiners should rely on objective clinical measurements and observations during content valid functional testing in combination with objective evidence gathered from a physical examination and a review of medical records. Functional Capacity Examiners should also consider subjective evidence from the person's self-reported pain and disability reports, which may include standardized questionnaires as well as subjective information provided by the individual through an interview as part of the FCE.⁷

Historically, return-to-work decisions were based upon diagnoses and prognoses of physicians, but did not include objective measurements of an individual's functional abilities. Most physicians are not trained to assess the full array of human functional abilities required for comprehensive disability determinations⁸ or return to work recommendations. The physician or treating provider determines diagnosis and medical prognosis, but should rely on functional testing to more objectively identify a person's functional abilities than their use of estimates, commonly called restrictions.⁹ In an evidence-based medical model, measurements are preferable to estimates.^{3,10}

Medically determinable impairments combined with the results from content valid functional testing administered by qualified Functional Capacity Examiners form the basis for establishing the severity of functional limitations and functional impairments.^{11,12}

FCE Utilization

FCEs are routinely utilized in cases involving workers' compensation, personal injury, long term disability, and Social Security Disability claims to determine an individual's ability to safely participate in work and other major life activities.

FCEs are commonly requested by physicians, attorneys, insurance claims adjusters, medical case managers, employers, and vocational rehab counselors. Individuals with self-reported activity

limitations may also request an FCE to provide objective documentation of their ability to safely participate in work and other major life activities.

Frequent indications for an FCE include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Functional testing performed as part of the work rehabilitation process such as safe entrance into an advanced work rehabilitation program. This may involve the Examiner selecting the most relevant tests for gap analysis between the individual's safe abilities and the job demands. The results are used for program development, to assess progress during the episode of care and as the basis for work recommendations and accommodations, if appropriate.
2. The individual has been participating in ongoing treatment, performance measures used during treatment may be used in combination with further testing to reach conclusions about the individual's ability to safely participate in work and other life activities during their recovery.
3. The individual has reached maximum rehabilitation potential. Current physical and/or cognitive abilities are requested to assist with claim closure.
4. The individual is working, but difficulty performing job tasks has been reported or observed. A job specific FCE should clearly identify whether there are gaps between safe functional abilities and job demands.
5. Healthcare provider's report that there is a discrepancy between the individual's subjective complaints and objective findings, and the FCE is requested to identify the individual's level of participation, consistency, and behaviors during the evaluation.
6. Physical and/or cognitive abilities data are needed for case management, disability determination, determination of loss of earning capacity, litigation settlement, or case resolution.
7. Physical and/or cognitive abilities are needed to help with a job-placement decision.
8. Physical and/or cognitive abilities are needed to assist with future rehabilitation or vocational planning.

The FCE Guidelines are intended for use by:

1. Examiners to properly design, administer, interpret and report FCEs
2. Referral sources to facilitate appropriate request for type of FCE needed and to integrate the findings into case management
3. Claims representatives from insurance companies, managed care organizations, and claims review organizations that request, authorize, review, and provide payment for FCEs
4. State & Federal Workers' Compensation regulatory agencies that request, authorize, review, provide payment, set reimbursement and regulations for FCEs
5. Social Security Disability Administration as a resource document
6. Employers, employees, organized labor, educators, students, researchers, and others as a resource document
7. The individual being evaluated

Functional Capacity Examiner

In this document, a Functional Capacity Examiner (Examiner) is a physical therapist or occupational therapist licensed in the jurisdiction in which the services are performed, who is able to demonstrate evidence of education, training, and competencies specific to the design, administration, and interpretation of FCEs.

Functional Capacity Examiners should utilize the best available evidence from clinically relevant research when designing and performing FCE protocols and when forming conclusions about an individual's ability to safely participate in work and other major life activities.¹³⁻¹⁵

Functional Capacity Examiners should be able to demonstrate a post-professional level of knowledge and clinical expertise across a broad spectrum of medical, vocational, psychological, and functional testing concepts. At a minimum, Functional Capacity Examiners should be able to demonstrate adequate knowledge and skills in the following areas¹⁶⁻²¹:

1. Examination (includes history, systems review and tests and measures)
 - a. Understanding of anatomy and physiology, and knowledge to choose the appropriate clinical examination test and measures to assess the involved area. This includes knowledge of¹
 - i. Cardiovascular/pulmonary system, including understanding and application of exercise and work physiology principles
 - ii. Musculoskeletal system
 - iii. Neuromuscular system
 - iv. Psychosocial principles
 - v. Body mechanics and work behaviors
 - vi. Integumentary system
2. Design and administration of FCEs, and interpretation of test results
 - a. Proficiency with the FCE test process being used, and understand the process' underlying safety, reliability, validity and practicality²²
 - b. Employ clearly defined test endpoints during testing that include physiological, biomechanical, and psychophysical factors²³⁻²⁸
 - c. The Examiner should be aware of his/her own fear-avoidant beliefs and biases as there is evidence suggesting that these beliefs can impact an individual's test results.²⁹
3. Physical Demands of work
 - a. Knowledge of physical work demands, activity frequency, repetitive movements and sustained postures
 - b. Able to utilize information contained in a job analysis to design and test an individual's functional performance of a specific job.
 - c. Understand essential versus marginal job functions
4. Ability to evaluate an individual's performance and participation

- a. Consider the physiological, biomechanical and behavioral indicators of effort demonstrated during testing
 - b. Ability to assess movement and performance consistency
 - c. Awareness of the facilitators and barriers that may impact the individual that includes individual and work-related factors, such as organizational and environmental considerations.
 - d. Understand pain neuroscience theory
- 5. Communication and coordination
 - a. Ability to establish rapport with the individual during the FCE process
 - b. Able to write an FCE report that addresses the referral source's questions and clearly identifies the individual's functional abilities and limitations. The report is discussed in detail in Section 10.
- 6. Laws and regulations relevant to FCE administration and use including
 - a. Worker's Compensation laws and regulations within the jurisdiction in which the injury occurred and/or evaluation is completed.
 - b. Social Security Disability Administration criteria⁷
 - c. Americans with Disabilities Act and Americans with Disability Amendment Act^{30,31}
 - d. Code of Uniform Guidelines for Employment Selection³²
 - e. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)³³
 - f. Regulations regarding expert testimony-Federal Rules of Evidence-Daubert Standard and Frye³⁴⁻³⁶

Referral, Medical Records, Safety Considerations and Consent

- 1. Referral for an FCE
 - a. The referral source should clearly communicate the purpose of the FCE and specify any particular issues the examiner should address.
 - b. If a job-specific FCE has been requested, the examiner needs detailed information regarding the physical requirements of the essential and marginal duties. This can be obtained from review of a job description or job analysis. In the absence of adequate information an on-site job analysis is recommended prior to the FCE to identify this information. In cases where on-site analysis cannot be performed, the Functional Capacity Examiner may rely on occupational information from O*Net³⁷ and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles³⁸. These sources provide general information and may reflect a range of job demands that might not accurately reflect a specific job position. While the individual being evaluated can provide information about his job duties and requirements, this information should be confirmed with the employer. The Functional Capacity Examiner should document the source of the physical job demands in the FCE report.
 - c. If treatment recommendations are desired, this should be stated in the FCE referral.

2. Medical Records that provide background regarding the individual's mechanism of injury or illness and subsequent treatment can provide helpful information to the Functional Capacity Examiner. Records may include operative notes, recent diagnostic test reports, physician records and occupational and physical therapy records.
3. Considerations for the Individual Being Tested
 - a. The individual should be medically stable, or the FCE test protocol should be administered within the safe confines of the individual's health condition. During the FCE, the Examiner is responsible for ensuring the individual's safety.
 - b. The individual must consent to participate in the FCE. A written informed consent specifically outlining the nature of the FCE is recommended. The consent should inform the individual of potential risks including but not limited to a temporary increase in symptoms, musculoskeletal soreness for several days, a temporary exacerbation of the current condition, re-injury of the affected body part, or an additional injury. The Examiner is responsible for ensuring that the individual fully understands the information presented, has an opportunity to ask questions, and all questions are answered in a manner the individual considers satisfactory.³⁹
 - c. The Examiner should stay abreast of current evidence-based practice guidelines to ensure safe administration of functional tests. Common reasons not to conduct an FCE or to cease testing include but are not limited to:
 - i. Performance of the test would compromise the individual's safety or medical condition^{5,40-43}. As used herein, safety refers to preventing a new injury or adversely affecting an individual's current condition. A transient increase in soreness or pain symptoms is not considered to be unsafe.⁴⁴
 - ii. Communication barriers preclude understanding test instructions, communicating concerns, or interpreting the individual's responses during the FCE.
 - iii. Individual does not provide consent to participate in the FCE.
 - iv. Caution should be used in testing during pregnancy as it may be difficult to differentiate functional impairment due to pregnancy from other more permanent conditions⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷.

Design

Functional Capacity Examiners should design and/or utilize established functional tests that meet the following criteria^{6,22}.

1. Safety. The tests should not be expected to lead to injury.
2. Reliability. The measures from the tests should produce consistent results.
3. Validity. The tests measure what they were intended to measure.
4. Practicality. The time and cost involved in the design, administration, interpretation and reporting of tests should be reasonable.
5. Utility. The results outlined in the FCE report should be comprehensible to non-medical readers and the results should provide useful information.

In addition, Functional Capacity Examiners should consider the following factors in the design and/or selection of functional tests⁴⁸:

1. Is the test or measure supported in the literature with regards to:
 - a. Reliability
 - i. Device
 - ii. Inter-rater
 - iii. Intra-rater
 - iv. Inter-session
 - b. Validity
 - i. Face
 - ii. Content
 - iii. Predictive
 - iv. Concurrent
 - v. Convergent
 - vi. Discriminant
2. In instances where a test does not have substantial accepted evidence, or the Examiner does not have access to the equipment/tools to use a test supported by evidence, the Examiner should consider significance of validity including:
 - a. Face
 - b. Content
 - c. Construct
 - d. Concurrent

There are 2 primary types of FCEs:

1. Job/Occupation Specific FCE.
 - a. The individual's functional abilities are matched to the physical and/or cognitive demands of a specific job(s) or a specific occupation(s).
 - b. The individual has usually reached MMI.
2. Any Occupation FCE.
 - a. The individual's functional abilities are not matched to the physical and/or cognitive demands of a specific job(s) or a specific occupation(s).
 - b. Often used in long term disability claims and Social Security Disability claims, but also in workers' compensation claims when it is known that the individual will not return to their prior job.
 - c. The individual has usually reached MMI.

The Examiner is ultimately responsible for determining the amount of time necessary to design, administer, and interpret the FCE based on the complexity of the case. Common factors used to determine the amount of time necessary for an FCE include the:

1. Type of FCE needed (job/occupation specific or any occupation)
2. Physical and/or cognitive demands of the job/occupation
3. Chronicity and severity of the individual's physical and cognitive impairments

The FCE expert panel recommends an allowance of up to 8 hours for a FCE conducted over a 1 to 2 day period. However, less or additional time may be necessary depending on case complexity.

The upper end of the recommended time allowance may be appropriate in the following situations:

1. Individual has chronic physical and/or cognitive impairments
2. Individual has reached MMI and permanent work restrictions are needed
3. Referral source requires information about an individual's ability to safely participate in work-related activities over multiple days
4. The individual has reports of chronic fatigue or delayed onset pain

Shorter testing time periods may be appropriate in the following situations:

1. Individual has acute to sub-acute physical and/or cognitive impairments
2. Individual has not reached MMI and temporary work restrictions are needed for early return to work
3. Baseline functional abilities are needed for participation in an advanced work rehabilitation program
4. To provide helpful information regarding an individual's ability to work.⁴⁹⁻⁵¹

Test Components

1. Referral Review
 - a. Reason for referral
 - b. Relationship of individual to referral source
2. Medical Record Review
 - a. Mechanism of injury
 - b. Individual's response to treatment to date
 - c. Objective diagnostic tests
 - d. Surgeries
 - e. Other relevant claims/medical history
3. Informed Consent
 - a. Include risk for injury, exacerbation of symptoms, or possibility of soreness in response to testing.
 - b. Include the exam procedures that will help to reduce that risk.
 - c. Discuss release of FCE information
 - d. Describe the FCE testing process
 - e. Address individual's concerns
4. Intake Interview
5. Psychosocial Screening and Comprehensive Pain Assessment includes⁵²⁻⁵⁷:
 - a. Use of evidence-based psychosocial/psychometric screens
 - b. Observation of the individual's pain behavior throughout the FCE examination.

- c. Measurement of the individual's physiological responses following acute episodes of increased pain
 - d. Use of a pain scale with functional descriptors.
 - e. Pain diagram
- 6. Systems Review/Physical Examination¹
 - a. Cardiovascular Respiratory
 - b. Integumentary
 - c. Musculoskeletal
 - d. Neuromuscular
 - e. Cognitive
- 7. Cardiovascular Respiratory Abilities Testing⁵⁸⁻⁶¹
- 8. Material Handling Testing —Ability to exert force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.^{37,62,63}
 - a. Lifting/Lowering
 - b. Carrying
 - c. Pushing/Pulling
 - d. Grasping/Pinching
- 9. Coordination, Flexibility, Postural Abilities Testing- Testing should include sustained and/or repeated observations of the ability to assume, maintain, and exit positions consistent with work including those defined by the DOL/DOT.
 - a. Dynamic Flexibility — the ability to quickly and repeatedly bend, stretch, twist, or reach out with your body, arms, and/or legs.
 - b. Extent Flexibility — the ability to bend, stretch, twist, or reach with the body, arms, and/or legs.
 - c. Gross Body Equilibrium — the ability to keep or regain your body balance or stay upright when in an unstable position.
 - d. Fingering and manual dexterity tasks
 - e. Common physical demand activities as reported by the Dictionary of Occupational Titles include^{63,64}
 - i. 1. Sitting
 - ii. 2. Standing
 - iii. 3. Walking
 - iv. 4. Climbing
 - v. 5. Balancing
 - vi. 6. Stooping
 - vii. 7. Kneeling
 - viii. 8. Crouching
 - ix. 9. Crawling
 - x. 10. Reaching
 - xi. 11. Handling
 - xii. 12. Fingering
- 10. Cognitive testing may be included dependent on symptoms, diagnosis or referral request and may include:
 - a. Cognitive factors
 - b. Perceptual/sensory factors

- c. Communicative factors
 - d. Behavioral factors
 - e. Psycho-emotional factors
11. Other Work Simulation Testing, as needed
 12. Post Test Systems Review
 13. Exit Interview and Instructions

Test Administration

Test administration should be sequenced and progressed to optimize the individual's performance and safety. The Examiner should be aware of the reason for referral prior to commencing the FCE. The Functional Capacity Examiner should use the initial intake interview and systems review to establish rapport with the individual and to determine the most appropriate test components to include in order to obtain the information requested. Any test that either does not provide the needed information or might place the individual at foreseeable risk of injury should be forgone. Throughout testing the Functional Capacity Examiner should monitor the individual's physiological, biomechanical, and psychophysical responses to activity.

Physiological monitoring includes regular assessment of heart rate for safety reasons and also as an indicator of an individual's effort level during testing. In cases when the individual's heart rate and heart rate response may be affected by medication or other factors revealed in the medical history such as a pacemaker, alternative monitoring should be employed. Alternatives may include the use of the Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale⁶⁵ as well as more reliance on respiratory rate and blood pressure. Other physiological monitoring includes, but is not limited to, cardiac rhythm, blood pressure, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, perspiration, color, and swelling.

Biomechanical monitoring should include, but is not limited to, clinical observations of muscle recruitment, movement patterns, stance, balance, and counterbalancing⁶⁶⁻⁶⁸.

The Examiner should monitor an individual's symptoms during the administration of an FCE for safety and as a component of a comprehensive pain assessment. Pain may be associated with a nociceptive response from injured tissue, an anticipation of a nociceptive response from injured tissue, or an individual's perception of threat of pain or harm. A fundamental challenge for the Examiner is to consider the degree to which psychosocial factors and symptom reports impact performance during functional testing.⁶⁹ The Examiner should incorporate a comprehensive pain assessment which includes psychosocial screening, pain behavior assessment, and physiological assessment in the administration of a FCE because research demonstrates that psychosocial factors influence performance.⁷⁰⁻⁷³ Psychosocial factors that influence performance include but are not limited to:

1. Perceived disability
2. Kinesiophobia/Fear Avoidance Beliefs
3. Catastrophizing
4. Anxiousness/Distress/Depressed Mood
5. Self-efficacy
6. Perceived Injustice

If information is requested about a client's cognitive abilities, cognitive functional testing may be appropriate. Cognitive Functional Evaluations require specialized training above and beyond standard physical based Functional Capacity Evaluations. For more information on Cognitive Functional Evaluations please reference the Emerging Trends in Functional Capacity Evaluation Section.

Test Component Administration:

1. Referral Review

The reason for referral is a key element in preparing for and designing an FCE to provide maximum utility for the referral source.

2. Medical Records Review

Medical records may provide information regarding the individual's medical history, extent of the injury, the treatment provided and the individual's response, and condition stability. The individual's medical history may include conditions directly related to or unrelated to the injury or illness that precipitated the referral, which should be considered by the examiner to ensure the individual's ability to safely participate in an FCE. Examples may include heavy lifting or extreme postures in the presence of mal-union or frank joint instability or unstable cardiovascular disease.

3. Informed Consent

Informed consent should be reviewed with the individual verbally and in writing and should include the purpose, risks, and benefits of testing.

4. Intake Interview

An interview which includes questions about current, recent, and past levels of pain and function provides insight into the nature, severity, and irritability of the individual's condition. Information from the intake interview can be used to develop the sequencing and rate of progression of test components, and helps the examiner target specific response to monitor.

5. Psychosocial Screening and Comprehensive Pain Assessment

As part of the comprehensive pain assessment the Examiner should incorporate evidence based psychometric/psychosocial questionnaires to determine how psychosocial factors influence pain reports and functional performance. The psychosocial/psychometric questionnaires used within the comprehensive pain assessment should not be used in isolation to make final conclusions in regards to the overall assessment of the individual's pain response. Some useful questionnaires are listed below: ⁷⁴⁻⁸⁷

- i. McGill Pain questionnaire
- ii. Dallas Pain questionnaire
- iii. Orebro Musculoskeletal Pain Screening questionnaire
- iv. Oswestry Back Disability questionnaire
- v. Neck Disability questionnaire
- vi. Quick DASH questionnaire
- vii. Lower Limb Outcomes questionnaire
- viii. Pain Disability Questionnaire

- ix. Pain Disability Index
- x. Perceived Injustice Questionnaire
- xi. Modified Somatic Perception questionnaire
- xii. Fear Avoidance Belief questionnaire
- xiii. Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia
- xiv. Functional Self Efficacy Scale
- xv. PHQ-9
- xvi. WHODAS 2.0

As part of a comprehensive pain assessment, the Examiner should monitor physiological responses associated with an acute increase in pain.^{88,89} The Examiner should be aware of research that reports that physiological responses may be due to an increased pain stimulus or the anticipation of the pain stimulus. The Examiner should also be aware that physiological response changes can be associated with increased physical exertion during the FCE. Whether the acute physiological responses are due to exertion, anticipation of pain, or an increased pain stimulus, the evidence is clear that during an FCE there should be physiological response changes.⁹⁰ When an individual reports an acute increase in pain during the FCE, the physiological responses monitored could include:

- 1. Increased heart rate
- 2. Increased blood pressure
- 3. Increased breathing rate
- 4. Diaphoresis
- 5. Pupil dilatation

During testing, the Examiner should monitor pain behaviors and reported symptoms, and consider the correlation between the observed behaviors, symptom reports and clinical examination findings. Pain behaviors can include but are not limited to^{52-57,91,92}:

- 1. Facial expressions: Frowning, grimacing, distorted expression, rapid blinking
- 2. Verbalizations/vocalizations: Sighing, moaning, calling out, asking for help
- 3. Body movements: Rigid, tense, guarding, fidgeting, increased pacing/rocking, biomechanical changes/compensations/substitution patterns and other mobility changes such as inactivity or motor restlessness
- 4. Changes in interpersonal interactions: Aggressive, resistive, disruptive, withdrawn
- 5. Changes in activity patterns: Sudden cessation of common routines
- 6. Mental status change: Crying, increased confusion, irritability, distress

The Examiner may consider utilizing a pain scale with functional descriptors (functional pain scale) during the comprehensive pain behavior assessment to

provide further evidence in forming an opinion about how the individual's pain affected observed function during testing.⁹³⁻⁹⁵

No single tool can be used to classify an individual's pain report as an accurate representation of pain that affects function or an inaccurate representation of the individual's subjective pain response, and the Functional Capacity Examiner should use a battery of the above-mentioned tools throughout the FCE to assist the examiner in determining how pain affects or does not affect the final functional abilities determination.

6. Systems Review/Physical Examination

A full systems review should be done in accordance with the current Guide to Physical Therapist Practice.¹ Particular attention should be paid to cardiovascular status including resting heart rate and blood pressure as well as other conditions which might preclude safe testing of specific functions or to levels that may preclude further stressing certain body systems.⁴⁵ Best evidence resources for exercise testing in general and for specific populations should be consulted when designing FCE protocols and considering specific medical conditions and findings and test development. Examples of organizations providing guidance on exercise testing include, but are not limited to, the American College of Sports Medicine^{40,96}, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Heart Association⁴¹, and the Centers for Disease Control⁹⁷.

When conducting components of a physical examination including, but not limited to, range of motion testing, strength testing, girth measurements, temperature measurements, and other diagnostic testing, the examiner should rely on tools and techniques that have demonstrated reliability and sensitivity to change. An example is volumetric measurement of small body parts rather than circumferential measures. Repeated trials and averages may be used in cases where this will increase reliability and sensitivity. Areas of impairment and those likely to change as a result of testing should be prioritized.

7. Aerobic Abilities Testing

Aerobic response to work demands is an important factor in determining an individual's ability to perform sustained work activity. Aerobic testing should be consistent with guidelines developed for safe test administration.^{40,98} Results of testing should be reported such that they relate to work demands and avoid reporting results that compare to age related normative values.^{98,99} The preferred method for reporting is in METs which can then be compared to functional activities both vocationally with regards to physical demand level or physical demand category,^{98,100} or compared to specific task performance.^{58,101}

There are several methods available for aerobic testing, including walking (on or off of a treadmill), stationary bicycle, steps, etc. The individual's job demands and history are factors to consider when choosing a methodology.

Job simulation tasks can also be used to determine an individual's aerobic tolerance to specific activities and used to substantiate the ability to maintain functions for various intensities, frequencies, and durations.

Research has clearly shown a linear relationship between aerobic capacity (oxygen consumption) and heart rate. Therefore, Examiners should use heart rate measurements obtained during functional capacity testing to reliably determine an individual's physiological endurance for tolerating activities over an 8-hour work day. As noted earlier in the Guideline, Examiners should be aware of any medications or medical conditions that could invalidate the use of heart rate for this purpose. The following formula provides a relatively easy method to determine an individual's percent maximum aerobic capacity⁶⁰:

% Maximum Aerobic Capacity = (Peak HR* – Resting HR)/[220-age] – Resting HR
*maximum heart rate during activity

8. Material Handling Testing

The ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects are essential functions of most occupations and are considered an essential component of FCE.^{38,63} It is recommended that testing follow established protocols that are designed to be progressive and include monitoring of the cardiorespiratory, musculoskeletal, and psychophysical responses to testing.¹⁰²⁻¹⁰⁴

NIOSH indicates that the size and coupling of the load are key factors for control in addition to the height and weight.⁶² Therefore it is recommended that testing commence with an object that is approximately 8-20" deep, has handles, and with minimal weight but to which additional weight can be added, such as a crate fabricated or sold for this purpose or an industrial crate. Caution should be used to assure that the container is in good condition and is rated for the maximum load to be tested.

NIOSH indicates that the height and symmetry of the load affects the abilities of individuals when lifting/lowering.⁶² Therefore, lifting/lowering should be assessed from and to various heights in an effort to replicate work demands.

Predetermined end points for physiological, biomechanical, and psychophysical responses should be included in any lifting/lower test protocol to assure the safety of the individual.^{102,103} Physiological monitoring should include at minimum heart rate and other variables such as respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, and cardiac rhythm when feasible or required for safe testing.

Biomechanical monitoring should include body mechanics including stance and counterbalancing as well as muscle recruitment patterns^{67,68}. This monitoring should be performed visually using predetermined categorical scales designed for the purpose.^{66-68,104} Psychophysical monitoring includes monitoring the individual's perceived pain, other symptoms, and reported effort. Tools such as a numeric pain rating scale, visual analogue pain scale, rated perceived exertion scale,⁶³ and rated perceived load scales provide an objective measure of the pain or perceived exertion.¹⁰³

Testing strength, power and endurance for force exertion are needed for most occupations and are generally reported consistent with Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and Department of Labor standards with regards to frequency. The DOT defines Occasional, Frequent, and Constant (see glossary). The DOT further categorizes force exertion related to work demands as Sedentary, Light, Medium, Heavy, and Very Heavy (see glossary).³⁸

a. Lifting/Lowering

- a. Lifting/Lowering should be tested progressively beginning with weights expected to be easily managed and in a manner that includes maximum opportunity for control.^{66,102,103} The vertical lift height should be noted.

b. Carrying

- a. Carrying should be tested progressively beginning with weights expected to be easily managed and in a manner that includes maximum opportunity for control. Carrying can be tested unilaterally or bimanually and should be conducted to best provide information needed by the referral source.

c. Pushing/Pulling

- a. Pushing and Pulling are common vocational demands and can encompass moving a number of objects including hospital beds and stretchers, pallet jacks, hand trucks, crates, doors, ropes, and wire.
 - i. The combination of the surface on which an object is pushed, the surface and weight of the object itself and the speed at which the object is being accelerated or decelerated determine the force needed to push or pull the object. In the case of a wheeled object the surface of the wheels and the supporting surface greatly affect the force needed to push or a pull a load of any given mass. The Examiner should use a calibrated force gauge to determine the forces exerted by the individual during testing.
 - ii. Pushing/Pulling testing should be progressive starting with the need for relatively little force and ending at maximum safe ability or the amount that provides the information needed by the referral source.
 - iii. Pushing/Pulling should, to the extent possible, be tested at the height and with similar equipment to that used or intended to be used by the individual.
 - iv. The individual's ability to generate push/pull force should be reported in pounds of force or ft-pounds, and note the height at which the force was applied.

b. Grasping/Pinching

- i. The use of the hands for producing force in grasping and pinching are essential to functioning in most work environments. Assessment of the ability to produce force for grasping and pinching should be measured in accordance with standard protocols.

9. Coordination, Flexibility, Postural Abilities Testing

- a. Work tasks require the worker to possess dynamic flexibility, extent flexibility, and gross body equilibrium³⁷ to complete occupational tasks

including: Sitting, Standing, Walking, Climbing, Balancing, Stooping, Kneeling, Crouching, Crawling, Reaching, Handling, and Fingering.³⁸ Testing of the individual's abilities related to flexibility and equilibrium and the ability to assume, maintain, and return from positions and complete handling and fingering tasks should be incorporated in the functional capacity evaluation in an effort to provide the referral source with needed information.

- b. Testing should be completed by direct observation and completed in a way to extrapolate abilities consistent with the DOT and DOL definitions of occasional, frequent, and constant³⁸ rather than compared to age related normal values or percentage of the population.
- c. Where task performance can be performed unilaterally and the individual's condition may affect performance of a single extremity, attempts should be made to provide abilities for each extremity independently. For example an individual with a history of a right shoulder injury may not possess the ability for reaching with the right upper extremity but may be able to reach with the left extremity frequently.

10. Other Work Simulation Testing

To the extent possible the FCE should incorporate work simulation testing once standardized testing indicates that more specific testing is safe. An example is a worker who needs to lift a keg of beer weighing 160.5 lbs. The examiner should perform progressive lifting near the actual weight of the keg prior to attempting to perform lifting of the actual keg of beer. Another example is an individual whose job requires climbing a utility pole. It is prudent to perform ladder climbing prior to performing pole climbing. Work Simulation testing may need to be performed in the field or equipment borrowed from the employer to adequately test the individual's abilities.

11. Post Test Systems Review, Exit Interview and Instructions

- a. The Examiner should conduct a post test systems review to assure that the testing has not had an unexpected or adverse effect on the body systems. In the event the system review reveals possible changes in the individual's status, further assessments of the relevant areas should be undertaken and documented by the Examiner.
- b. The Exit Interview should assess the subjective response of the individual to the testing procedures including perceived changes in location and intensity of complaints including but not limited to pain. Tingling, numbness, stiffness, weakness, instability, and feelings of swelling or spasm are also changes that the individual may perceive and should be documented.
- c. Exit instructions may include the individual's rights with regards to access to the test results, and a timeframe as to when results might be available, if appropriate. The Examiner should provide instructions to actions that should be taken if the individual has any questions or concerns following testing, including reports of significant symptoms.

Interpretation

Examiners should make every attempt to encourage an individual to report accurate levels of pain and other symptoms, and to put forth good effort during the FCE.

Examiner interpretation of test data requires triangulation of multiple data sets in order to provide meaningful and useful information to the requestor. The 3 primary areas of consideration include a determination of the individual's:

1. Performance or Effort level
2. Effect of pain and other symptoms on test performance
3. Residual functional capacity including functional abilities and functional limitations

A. Performance or Effort Level

Examiners must consider the individual's test participation and effort during the FCE, and make a determination about effort based on the preponderance of data. The determination is based on the test endpoints (physiological, biomechanical, and psychophysical), the individual's reported symptoms and associated behaviors, clinical examination findings, movement/performance consistency, and observed signs associated with pain.

A determination regarding the individual's effort during the FCE informs the report user the extent to which the data approximates the individual's ability to safely participate in work and other major life activities. When determining an individual's performance consistency, the Examiner should consider the scoring patterns (performance patterns). A progressive score increase (increase in performance) may suggest a learning effect or improved confidence of the individual, while a progressive score decrease (decrease in performance) may reflect fatigue or an unresolved clinical condition.

The Examiner should not rely solely on the coefficient of variance statistical measure when assessing an individual's performance during testing, since it is possible to perform consistently at submaximal levels. The Examiner should consider consistency in conjunction with other physiological and biomechanical signs of effort such as heart rate, respiration rate, changes in stance, counterbalancing and muscle recruitment. The Examiner should have a good understanding of the testing protocols and potential sources of error that may lead to misinterpretation of the results.

To more accurately predict an individual's ability to safely perform work-related activities over an 8-hour period, it is recommended that Examiners utilize the following work physiology guidelines for interpreting the results of heart rate responses used for calculating percent maximum aerobic capacity⁶⁰:

<u>Duration</u>	<u>% Max Aerobic Capacity</u>
8 hours	33
1 hour	50
20 min	70
5 min	85

B. Effect of Pain and other Symptoms

Pain or the anticipation of pain or other symptoms may influence an individual's performance during testing. Examiners should consider the extent to which an individual's pain or other symptoms impacted test performance. Significant changes in an individual's reported pain or other symptoms that occur during or after testing should be correlated with objective changes in physical signs including, but not limited to heart rate, blood pressure, muscle spasm, joint warmth, and/or swelling.

If it is determined that an individual's pain and other symptoms are consistent with objective medical evidence, and the individual has demonstrated signs associated with significant effort during testing, the Examiner should adjust the final recommendations about an individual's functional abilities and functional limitations to reflect activity levels to one that is expected to better accommodate their safe work tolerances and be sustainable over time in a productive work environment.

However, if it is determined that an individual's pain and other symptoms are not consistent with objective medical evidence, and the individual's test performance showed less than good effort, the Examiner should not rely on the individual's self-reports of pain or other symptoms as a basis to adjust their functional abilities and functional limitations.

C. Residual Functional Capacity

Residual Functional Capacity represents what an individual can still do despite functional limitations resulting from a medically determinable impairment(s) and impairment-related symptoms.

In determining an individual's residual functional capacity, the Examiner should rely on objective clinical measurements and observations during content valid functional testing in combination with objective evidence gathered from a physical examination and a review of medical records. The Examiner should also consider subjective evidence gathered from multiple sources of self-reported pain and disability questionnaires along with subjective information provided by an individual.

In cases where the individual provided appropriate observable signs of effort or predictable compensatory strategies related to diagnosis and physical impairments along with pain behavior, the Functional Capacity Examiner should consider the individual's subjective reports of pain, other symptoms and limitations when arriving at a final conclusion regarding functional abilities and limitations. For example, if an individual reports an increase in pain or other symptoms in conjunction with a functional activity circuit, the individual's tolerance with the specific activities that caused the increase in pain or other symptoms should be adjusted to a lower functional level in order to ensure the individual's activity tolerance on a safe and dependable basis. In cases where an individual consistently performs at a low activity level and has a high symptom-focus, the results reflect the individual's activity tolerance or minimal functional abilities.

Reporting

The FCE report is the product produced by the Examiner. The report should be clearly written and easily understood by nonmedical individuals. The use of abbreviations and jargon should be avoided. The results should be reported using generally accepted terminology as defined in this Guideline and supporting references. Each page should be numbered. If there are intentional blank spaces or pages in the report, it should be noted that this is intentional. The Examiner's name and specialty should be identified. Often, a summary of findings listing functional abilities, functional limitations and the individual's performance participation precedes the detailed report data, to facilitate application of the results. The report should contain the following components³, but not necessarily in this order:

- A. Introduction: the reason(s) for the FCE/type of FCE performed.
- B. Individual's demographic and background information:
 - a. Individual's data: age, sex, height, weight
 - b. Diagnosis
 - c. Occupation, if applicable
 - d. Hand dominance
 - e. Splints, braces or assistive devices worn during the FCE
- C. List and summary of medical records
- D. Summary of information from the individual interview
- E. Summary of results of activities of daily living or psychometric questionnaires with discussion of the significance of the results
- F. Clinical examination findings
- G. Results of the functional tests including test endpoint reached and physiological/biomechanical/psychophysical results
- H. Discussion of individual's performance level (effort and consistency) and pain behaviors
- I. Summary of functional abilities and limitations
 - a. Identification of accommodations to lessen impact of any functional limitations
- J. If job or occupation specific FCE, compare individual's abilities with job and/or occupational demands
- K. Recommendations, if appropriate and requested, may include:
 - a. Transitional work recommendations
 - b. Treatment
 - c. If requested, an opinion statement defining the functional limitations as temporary or permanent
 - i. If temporary, functional re-testing may be done at a later date to reassess safe work tolerances, functional limitations, and restrictions
 - ii. If permanent, the results of the FCE should be considered applicable for a range of time up to 6 months. This is dependent on the nature of the injury/illness, and whether any other health condition, injury or other factor changes the individual's health status or lifestyle. In the absence of any substantive change in the individual's health status or lifestyle, a repeat FCE to update the individual's functional status is recommended.

Emerging Trends in Functional Capacity Evaluations

Functional Capacity Evaluations will continue to evolve in response to updates in technology and research. Examiners should stay up to date on trends, legislation, legal precedent, technology and research occurring in the United States and abroad. Functional Capacity Examiners should be aware of current trends which include:

- A. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Requirement Survey
 - a. Beginning in 2012 the Bureau of Labor statistics began working with the Social Security Administration to collect information about the occupational requirements for workers in jobs throughout the United States. The Occupational Requirements Surveys “ORS” goal is to collect and publish occupational information that will be used by the Social Security Administration to help make decisions for their disability program. Examiners should monitor of the progress of the ORS as it may change definitions, classifications and terms associated with physical demands, environmental exposure, education/training and cognitive demands.
- B. Cognitive Functional Capacity Evaluation
 - a. Cognitive Functional Capacity Evaluations are a fast growing service line for Examiners who receive special training in this specialized evaluation.
 - i. Cognitive functional testing may address four essential and unique components¹⁰⁵⁻¹¹¹:
 - 1. An analysis of the essential cognitive demands required of an occupation which include:
 - a. Independent clinical judgment
 - b. Work review and observation
 - c. Work pace and the worker’s ability to control pace
 - d. Changes in tasks, location, and work schedule
 - e. Frequency and nature of work related individual interactions
 - f. Resources pertaining cognitive demands (i.e. O*NET, Cognitive Abilities Profiler).
 - 2. An ecologically valid measure of the individual’s function and suitability for return to work, with consideration for the individual (intrinsic factors), the environment (extrinsic factors) and the critical cognitive demands of the identified occupation.
 - 3. A valid measure of work-oriented executive functioning, with attention to the individual’s approach to the task (i.e. initiation, execution, organization, planning, problem-solving, and task monitoring) and self (i.e. inhibition, impulse control, self-monitoring).
 - 4. Evaluation of insight/awareness through interview, structured observation, questionnaires and collateral information.
 - ii. Given issues of complexity, mental stamina/activity tolerance and durability, a range of 6 to 8 hours over 1 to 2 days is recommended when cognitive functional testing is a desired component of the FCE.

- iii. If an FCE is requested pertaining to an individual's cognitive, perceptual/sensory, communicative, behavioral, and psycho-emotional factors, the Functional Capacity Examiner should incorporate standardized assessment of cognitive functioning including but not limited to the following assessments:
 - 1. Montreal Cognitive Assessment
 - 2. Mini Mental Status Examination
 - 3. Cognitive Assessment of Minnesota Manual Dexterity Test
 - 4. Rivermead Behavioral Memory Test
 - 5. Test of Everyday Attention
 - 6. Multidimensional Task Ability Profiler
 - 7. Rivermead Post-Concussive Symptoms Questionnaire
 - 8. Headache Impact Test
 - 9. Barrow Neurological Fatigue Scale
 - 10. Awareness Questionnaire
- C. Wearable Technology
 - a. Wearable technology in therapy clinics and associated with ergonomics is advancing. Examiners should monitor the literature and be aware of applications of wearable technology for use in functional testing. Examples of wearable technology include electrogoniometers, strain gauge sensors, piezoresistive/piezoelectric sensors, accelerometers, and surface EMG.¹¹²
- D. Use of Population norms
 - a. In cases where an individual self-limits performance throughout the FCE, or performs erratically, some expert Examiners advocate estimating the individual's abilities based on all other objective evidence including but not limited to diagnostic imaging from the individual's medical records, physical examination findings, biomechanical and physiological responses during functional testing, and the use of age-gender based population norms for material handling and other functional activities.^{52,69,74,113-124}
- E. Functional Capacity Evaluation Research, Court Precedent and Legislation
 - a. Functional Capacity Evaluation research remains an important component of providing a customer with a valid and reliable performance based medical evaluation. There remains and always will be legal precedent disseminated by the court system in regard to Functional Capacity Evaluations. Federal and state legislation associated with FCE's may change along with modifications in state practice acts, research and legal precedents. Examiners are encouraged to continually monitor research developments, legal precedent disseminated by the court system, and legislation that could alter documentation, testing procedures and a customer's needs when performing FCE's.

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Reference Tables

Table 1	Physical Demand Reference Data^{1,2,3,4}
Sedentary 1.5-2.1 METS	Exerting up to 10 pounds force occasionally or a negligible amount of force frequently. Sitting is required frequently to constantly and the work may involve brief periods of standing or walking occasionally.
Light 2.2-3.5 METS	Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. Standing or walking are usually required frequently to constantly and the work may involve brief periods of sitting occasionally. In a few occupations, sitting may be required frequently to constantly while operating arm or leg controls. Light work may also be production pace work requiring negligible force.
Medium 3.6-6.3 METS	Exerting 21-50 pounds of force occasionally, or 11-25 pounds of force frequently, or greater than negligible up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects. Standing or walking are usually required frequently to constantly and the work may involve brief periods of sitting occasionally.
Heavy 6.4-7.5 METS	Exerting 51-100 pounds of force occasionally, or 26 to 50 pounds of force frequently, or 11 to 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects. Standing or walking are usually required frequently to constantly and the work may involve brief periods of sitting occasionally.
Very Heavy >7.5 METS	Exerting in excess of 100 pounds of force occasionally, or in excess of 50 pounds of force frequently, or in excess of 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects. Standing or walking are usually required frequently to constantly and the work may involve brief periods of sitting occasionally.
(N) Not Present	Activity or condition does not exist.
(O) Occasional	Activity or condition exists up to 1/3 of the time; up to 2 ½ hours day; 1-12 repetitions per hour; or 1-100 repetitions per day.
(F) Frequent	Activity or condition exists more than 1/3 up to 2/3 of the time; more than 2 ½ hours day up to 5 ¼ hours per day; 13-62 repetitions per hour; or 101-500 repetitions per day.
(C) Constant	Activity or condition exists more than 2/3 of the time; more than 5 ¼ hours per day; 63 or more repetitions per hour; or more than 500 repetitions per day.
Non-repetitive	Activity is performed less than 30 times per hour or less than 240 times per day. Use of keyboard less than 4 hours per day.
Sitting	Remaining in a seated position.
Standing	Remaining on one's feet in an upright position at a workstation without moving about.
Walking	Moving about on foot.
Lifting	Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling).
Carrying	Transporting an object, usually holding it in the hands or arms or on the shoulder.
Pushing	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (includes slapping, striking, kicking, and treadle actions).
Pulling	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (includes jerking).

CL	Climbing	Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles, and the like, using feet and legs or hands and arms. Body agility is emphasized.
BA	Balancing	Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on narrow, slippery, or erratically moving surfaces; or maintaining body equilibrium when performing gymnastic feats.
ST	Stooping	Bending body downward and forward by bending spine at the waist, requiring full use of the lower extremities and back muscles.
KN	Kneeling	Bending legs at knees to come to rest on knee or knees.
CR	Crouching	Bending body downward and forward by bending legs and spine.
CW	Crawling	Moving about on hands and knees or hands and feet.
RE	Reaching	Extending hand(s) and arm(s) in any direction.
HA	Handling	Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or otherwise working with hand or hands. Fingers are involved only to the extent that they are an extension of the hand, such as to turn a switch or shift automobile gears.
FI	Fingering	Picking, pinching, or otherwise working primarily with fingers rather than with the whole hand or arm as in handling.

Table 2	Physical Demands Reference Data³			
Duration Requirement	Not Present	Occasional	Frequent	Constant
	0%	1-33%	34-66%	67-100%
Physical Demand	0 minutes	Up to 2 ½ hrs	More than 2 ½ hrs up to 5 ¼ hrs	More than 5 ¼ hrs
	0 repetitions	Up to 100 repetitions	101 to 500 repetitions	More than 500 repetitions
Climbing	11,063 (87%)	1295 (10%)	399 (3%)	4 (<1%)
Balancing	11,845 (93%)	683 (5%)	223 (2%)	10 (<1%)
Stooping	8,278 (65%)	3,001 (24%)	1,466 (11%)	16 (<1%)
Kneeling	10,924 (86%)	1,366 (11%)	470 (3%)	1 (<1%)
Crouching	9,988 (78%)	1,994 (16%)	774 (6%)	5 (<1%)
Crawling	12,372 (97%)	322 (3%)	67 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Reaching	111 (1%)	957 (7%)	10,337 (81%)	1,356 (11%)
Handling	98 (1%)	895 (7%)	10,352 (81%)	1,416 (11%)
Fingering	2,046 (16%)	3,693 (29%)	6,438 (50%)	584 (5%)

Reference Table Notes

Table 2 provides the number and percentage (%) of occupations where a physical demand is required as Not Present, Occasional, Frequent, and Constant.

Glossary

Activity. The execution of a task or action by an individual.

Activity limitation. Difficulties an individual may have in executing activities. It may also reflect an activity that an individual cannot perform.

Activity restriction. An activity an individual should not do. This is different than an activity limitation, which is an activity an individual is unable to perform.

Adverse impact. A substantially different rate of selection in hiring, promotion, or other employment decision which works to the disadvantage of members of a race, color, religion, sex, ethnic group, age group, or disability.

Aptitudes. Capacities or abilities required of an individual in order to facilitate the learning of some task or job duty. There are 5 levels of aptitude requirements of jobs. There are 11 aptitudes used by the United States Employment Service for job analysis: 1) General Learning Ability; 2) Verbal Aptitude; 3) Numerical Aptitude; 4) Spatial Aptitude; 5) Form Perception; 6) Clerical Perception; 7) Motor Coordination; 8) Finger Dexterity; 9) Manual Dexterity; 10) Eye-Hand-Foot Coordination; 11) Color Discrimination.

Atmospheric conditions. Exposure to conditions such as fumes, noxious odors, dusts, mists, gases, and poor ventilation that affect the respiratory system, eyes, or the skin.

Balancing. Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on narrow, slippery, or erratically moving surfaces; or maintaining body equilibrium when performing gymnastic feats.

Behavioral. Pertaining to reactions made in response to social stimuli.

Biomechanical limitation. Termination of a particular functional test by an Examiner for safety purposes based on established observational criteria including but not limited to muscle recruitment, body mechanics, base of support, posture, and control and safety.

Capacity. The highest probable level of functioning of an individual in a given domain at a given moment.

Carrying. Transporting an object, usually holding it in the hands or arms or on the shoulder.

Catastrophizing. To imagine the worst possible outcome of an action or event: to think about a situation or event as being catastrophe or having a potentially catastrophic outcome.

Climbing. Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles, and the like, using feet and legs or hands and arms. Body agility is emphasized.

Cognitive Functional Capacity Evaluation (Cog FCE). An FCE with additional evaluation criteria pertaining to cognitive, perceptual/sensory, communicative, behavioral, and psycho-emotional factors associated with a broad range of diagnoses, including but not limited to acquired or traumatic brain injury, cerebral vascular accident, and mental health diagnoses.

Color vision. Ability to identify and distinguish colors.

Compensation. Correction of an organic defect or loss by [hypertrophy](#) or by increased functioning of another organ or unimpaired parts of the same organ.

Comprehensive Pain Behavior Assessment. An assessment during an FCE to determine if an individual's self-reported symptoms and perceived limitations are consistent with objective medical evidence.

Communicative. Tending to [communicate](#): talkative.

Constant activity. The activity or condition exists more than 2/3 of the time, or more than 5 ¼ hours in an 8 hour work day, or more than 62 repetitions per hour, or more than 500 repetitions in an 8 hour work day.

Continuous activity. Remaining in a posture or performing an activity for a specified amount of time without interruption to change to a different posture.

Content validity. Demonstrated by data showing that the content of a selection procedure is representative of important aspects of performance on the job.

Construct validity. Demonstrated by data showing that the selection procedure measures the degree to which candidates have identifiable characteristics which have been determined to be important for successful job performance.

Criterion-related validity. Demonstrated by empirical data showing that the selection procedure is predictive of or significantly correlated with important elements of work behavior.

Crawling. Moving about on hands and knees or hands and feet.

Crouching. Bending body downward and forward by bending legs and spine. Same as Squatting.

Depression. Condition of general emotional dejection and withdrawal; sadness greater and more prolonged than that warranted by any objective reason.

Depth perception. Three dimensional vision. Ability to judge distances and spatial relationships so as to see objects where and as they actually are.

Diaphoresis. Profuse perspiration artificially induced.

Disability. An umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).

Distress. Great pain, anxiety, or sorrow; acute physical or mental suffering; affliction; trouble.

Effort. The conscious exertion of physical and/or mental power to participate in an activity.

Environmental conditions. The surroundings in which a job is performed. There are 14 environmental conditions: 1) Exposure to weather; 2) Extreme cold; 3) Extreme heat; 4) Wet/and or humid; 5) Noise intensity level; 6) Vibration; 7) Atmospheric conditions; 8) Proximity to moving mechanical parts; 9) Exposure to electrical shock; 10) Working in high exposed places; 11) Exposure to radiation; 12) Working with explosives; 13) Exposure to toxic or caustic chemicals; 14) Other environmental conditions.

Environmental factors. Environmental factors make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives.

Essential job function. The basic duties than an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Evaluation. A dynamic process in which the physical therapist and/or occupational therapist makes clinical judgments based on data gathered during the examination.

Examination. A comprehensive screening and specific testing process leading to diagnostic classification or, as appropriate, to a referral to another practitioner. The examination has three components: the patient/client history; the systems review; and tests and measures.

Executive Functioning. A set of processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation.

Exertional limitations. Functional limitations caused by an individual's impairment(s) and related symptoms such as pain that affect an individual's ability to meet the strength demands of jobs (sitting, standing, walking, lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling).

Exposure to toxic or caustic chemicals. Exposure to possible bodily injury from toxic or caustic chemicals.

Exposure to electrical shock. Exposure to possible bodily injury from electrical shock.

Exposure to radiation. Exposure to possible bodily injury from radiation.

Exposure to weather. Exposure to outside atmospheric conditions.

Extreme cold. Exposure to non-weather-related cold temperatures.

Extreme heat. Exposure to non-weather-related hot temperatures.

Far acuity. Clarity of vision at 20 feet or more.

Feeling. Perceiving attributes of objects, such as size, shape, temperature, or texture, by touching with skin, particularly that of fingertips.

Field of vision. Observing an area that can be seen up and down or to right or left while eyes are fixed on a given point.

Fingering. Picking, pinching, or otherwise working primarily with fingers rather than with the whole hand or arm as in handling.

Frequent activity. The activity or condition exists more than 1/3 and up to 2/3 of the time, or more than 2 ½ hours up to 5 ¼ hours in an 8 hour work day, or more than 13 and up to 62 repetitions per hour, or more than 100 and up to 500 repetitions in an 8 hour work day.

Functional ability. The ability to safely participate in work and/or other major life activities. Functional abilities are determined by an Examiner based on the results of an FCE.

Functional capacity evaluation (FCE). A comprehensive performance-based medical assessment of an individual's physical and/or cognitive abilities to safely participate in work and other major life activities. FCEs are designed, administered, and interpreted by Examiners.

Functional Capacity Examiner (Examiner). A physical therapist or occupational therapist licensed in the jurisdiction in which the services are performed, who is able to demonstrate evidence of education, training, and competencies specific to the design, administration, and interpretation of FCEs.

Functional impairment. The loss of functional ability to safely perform occupational and/or job specific activities. This term is sometimes but not always associated with the severity of anatomic/physiologic impairment obtained from an impairment evaluation. The severity of an individual's functional impairment is determined by an Examiner based on the results of an FCE.

Functional limitation. The inability to safely participate in work and/or other major life activities due to medically determinable impairment(s). Functional limitations are determined by an Examiner based on the results of an FCE.

General educational development (GED). The formal and informal education which develops basic reasoning, ability to follow directions, math, and language skills. Experience and/or self-study can develop GED. There are 3 categories of GED: Reasoning; Math; and Language. This worker characteristic is expressed as one of 6 levels: 1-3 Low; 4-5 Average; 6 High.

GOE (Interest Areas). Guide for Occupational Exploration. A liking or preference for an activity. There are 12 interest factors used by the USES in job analysis: 1) Artistic;

2) Scientific; 3) Plants and Animals; 4) Protective; 5) Mechanical; 6) Industrial; 7) Business Detail; 8) Selling; 9) Accommodating; 10) Humanitarian; 11) Leading-Influencing; 12) Physical Performing.

Grasping. Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or otherwise working with hand or hands. Fingers are involved only to the extent that they are an extension of the hand, such as to turn a switch or shift automobile gears. Same as Handling.

Handling. Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or otherwise working with hand or hands. Fingers are involved only to the extent that they are an extension of the hand, such as to turn a switch or shift automobile gears. Same as Grasping.

Hearing. Perceiving the nature of sounds by ear.

Heavy work. Exerting 51 to 100 pounds of force occasionally, or 26 to 50 pounds of force frequently, or 11 to 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

Highly skilled work (levels 8-9). Work requiring over 4 years up to and including 10 years (level 8) or over 10 years (level 9) for the worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation.

Impairment. A significant deviation, loss, or loss of use of any body structure or function in an individual with a health condition, disorder, or disease.

Impairment evaluation. A medical evaluation using a standard method (i.e. AMA Guides) to determine permanent anatomic or physiologic impairment associated with a physical or mental condition.

Impairment rating. A consensus-derived percentage estimate of loss of activity reflecting severity for a given health condition, and the degree of associated limitations in terms of activities of daily living. This term is sometimes but not always associated with the severity of functional impairment.

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, known more commonly as ICF, is a classification of health and health-related domains. ICF is the WHO framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels.

Invalid performance. The individual's test performance was not consistent with the severity of their medically determinable impairments based on biomechanical, physiological, and psychophysical factors.

Job. A group of positions within an establishment which are identical with respect to their major or significant tasks and sufficiently alike to justify their being covered by a single analysis. There may be one or many persons employed in the same job.

Job analysis. The process of quantifying the physical and cognitive demands of a job using a combination of techniques including interview, observation, and objective measurements.

Job description. A written statement of job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications necessary to safely perform a job.

Kinesiophobia. A term that describe people's fear of pain due to movement, a factor that hinders rehabilitation and prolongs disability and pain.

Kneeling. Bending legs at knees to come to rest on knee or knees.

Lifting. Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling).

Light work. Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. A job should be rated Light work when it requires: (1). Walking or standing to a significant degree; or (2). Sitting most of the time but entails pushing or pulling of arm or leg controls; or (3). Working at a production rate pace entailing constant pushing or pulling of materials even though the weight of those materials is negligible. **SSR 83-10** further defines the full range of Light work as requiring 6 or more hours of intermittent standing or walking in an 8-hour workday. Sitting may be required only intermittently and occasionally.

Major life activities. Activities including, but are limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Malingering. The intentional production of false or grossly exaggerated physical or psychological symptoms motivated by external incentives. The motive for feigning a disorder may be to obtain financial compensation, drugs, avoid work, lessen a criminal sentence, escape incarceration, or to gain sympathy. The scope of a diagnosis of malingering is reserved to psychiatrists or qualified psychologists based on formal psychological testing.

Marginal job function. The basic duties than an employee may perform, but they are not essential job functions.

Maximum medical improvement. The point at which a patient's medical condition has stabilized and is unlikely to change (improve or worsen) substantially in the next year, with or without treatment as determined by a physician.

Maximum rehabilitation potential. The point at which a patient will no longer benefit from either physical rehabilitation as determined by a physical therapist or occupational therapist, or cognitive behavioral therapy interventions as determined by a psychologist.

Medically determinable impairment. An impairment that results from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities that can be shown by medical evidence consisting of signs, symptoms, and diagnostic findings. A medically determinable impairment cannot be established in the absence of objective medical abnormalities.

Medically stable. The medical condition is not significantly changing on a day to day basis.

Medium work. Exerting 21 to 50 pounds of force occasionally, or 11 to 25 pounds of force frequently, or greater than negligible up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

Near acuity. Clarity of vision at 20 inches or less.

Negligible weight/force. The weight or force is so small an amount that measurement is not meaningful (i.e. a pen, a few sheets of paper). Less than 1 pound.

Noise intensity level. The noise intensity level to which the worker is exposed in the job environment. This factor is expressed by one of five levels.

Non-exertional limitations. Functional limitations caused by an individual's impairments and related symptoms, such as pain, that affect an individual's ability to meet the demands of jobs other than the strength demands (i.e. reaching, handling, fingering, stooping, squatting, etc.).

Non-repetitive activity. Performing the same task(s) less than 30 repetitions per hour, or less than 240 repetitions in an 8 hour work day. Use of keyboard less than 4 hours per day.

Not present. The activity or condition does not exist.

Observable. Able to be seen, heard, or otherwise perceived by a person other than the person performing the action.

Occasional activity. The activity or condition exists up to 1/3 of the time, or up to 2 ½ hours in an 8 hour work day, or up to 12 repetitions per hour, or up to 100 repetitions in an 8 hour work day.

Occupation. A group of jobs, found at more than one establishment, in which a common set of tasks are performed or are related in terms of similar objectives, methodologies, materials, products, worker actions, or worker characteristics.

Pain. An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage.

Pain behavior. Verbal and/or nonverbal manifestations of discomfort, and perhaps distress and suffering. The behavior or behaviors may be audible complaints – actions such as a grimace or other facial expression, abnormal posture, guarding, or rubbing a body part, a limp, or use of a walking aid, brace or other device – or inaction such as activity avoidance, even bedrest. Pain

behaviors reflect the way persons think, feel, and act in response to their discomfort, and the way they communicate their symptoms to others.

Participation. Involvement in a life situation.

Participation restrictions. Problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations.

Perceptual. Relating to, or involving [perception](#) especially in relation to awareness of the elements of environment through physical [sensation](#).

Perceived disability. An individual's perceptions about their own abilities and limitations with participating in major life activities.

Perceived injustice. An individual's cognitive appraisal comprising of elements of severity of loss, perceived irreparability of loss, a sense of unfairness and the external attribution of blame following a painful injury.

Performance validity. The degree to which an individual's test performance was consistent with objective medical evidence based on biomechanical, physiological, and psychophysical factors.

Physical demands. The physical requirements made on the worker by the specific job-worker situation. There are 26 physical demands: 1) Standing; 2) Walking; 3) Sitting; 4) Lifting; 5) Carrying; 6) Pushing; 7) Pulling; 8) Climbing; 9) Balancing; 10) Stooping; 11) Kneeling; 12) Squatting (Crouching); 13) Crawling; 14) Reaching; 15) Handling; 16) Fingering; 17) Feeling; 18) Talking; 19) Hearing; 20) Tasting/Smelling; 21) Near Acuity; 22) Far Acuity; 23) Depth Perception; 24) Accommodation; 25) Color Vision; and 26) Field of Vision.

Physiological limitation. Termination of a particular functional test by a Functional capacity examiner for safety purposes based on established physiological criteria including but not limited to heart rate, oxygen saturation, blood pressure, and respiratory rate.

Preponderance of evidence. The greater weight of the evidence required in a civil (non-criminal) lawsuit for the trier of fact (jury or judge without a jury) to decide in favor of one side or the other. This preponderance is based on the more convincing evidence and its probable truth or accuracy, and not on the amount of evidence.

Proximity to moving mechanical parts. Exposure to possible bodily injury from moving mechanical parts of equipment, tools, or machinery.

Psycho-emotional. Describing any [psychological](#) interaction with the [emotions](#).

Psychometric. The [psychological](#) theory or technique of mental measurement

Psychophysical limitation. Termination of a particular functional test by the individual being tested based on established subjective criteria including but not limited to the individual

reporting the inability to safely perform or complete the activity. The Functional capacity examiner may also choose to terminate a particular functional test based on an individual's uncooperative behaviors compromising safety.

Psychosocial. Involving both psychological and social aspects

Psychosomatic disorders. A group of disorders characterized by the presence of physical symptoms that are caused or exacerbated by psychological factors.

Pulling. Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (includes jerking).

Pushing. Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (includes slapping, striking, kicking, and treadle actions).

Reaching. Extending hand(s) and arm(s) in any direction.

Reasonable accommodation. Any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

Regular and continuous basis. Being able to maintain a fulltime work schedule 8 hours per day for 5 days per week, or an equivalent work schedule.

Repetitive activity. Performing the same task(s) 30 or more repetitions per hour, or 240 or more repetitions in an 8 hour work day. Use of a keyboard 4 or more hours per day.

Residual functional capacity. Represents what an individual can still do despite functional limitations resulting from a medically determinable impairment(s) and impairment-related symptoms.

Risk. Refers to the chance of harm to the individual, co-worker, or to the general public if the individual engages in specific work activities.

Sedentary work. Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally or a negligible amount of force frequently to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects, including the human body. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time, but may involve walking or standing for brief periods of time. Jobs are Sedentary if walking and standing are required only occasionally and all other Sedentary criteria are met. **SSR 83-10** further defines Sedentary work as requiring about 6 hours of sitting and no more than 2 hours of standing or walking in an 8-hour workday.

Selection procedure. Any measure, combination of measures, or procedure used as a basis for any employment decision. Selection procedures include the full range of assessment techniques from traditional paper and pencil tests, performance tests, training programs, or probationary periods and physical, educational, and work experience requirements through informal or casual interviews and unscored application forms.

Selection rate. The proportion of applicants or candidates who are hired, promoted, or otherwise selected.

Self-Efficacy. Confidence in one's own ability to achieve intended results.

Semi-skilled work (levels 3-4). Work requiring over 1 month up to and including 3 months (level 3) or over 3 months up to and including 6 months (level 4) for the worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation.

Sensation. A mental process resulting from the immediate external stimulation of a [sense](#) organ often as distinguished from a conscious awareness of the [sensory](#) process.

Sitting. Remaining in a seated position.

Skill. A present, observable competence to perform a learned psychomotor skill.

Skilled work (levels 5-7). Work requiring over 6 months up to and including 1 year (level 5), over 1 year up to and including 2 years (level 6), or over 2 years up to and including 4 years (level 7) for the worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation.

Specific vocational preparation (SVP). The amount of lapsed time required by a typical worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation. This training may be acquired in a school, work, military, institutional, or vocational environment. This worker characteristic is expressed as one of 9 levels: 1-2 Unskilled; 3-4 Semi-Skilled; 5-7 Skilled; 8-9 Highly Skilled.

Squatting. Bending body downward and forward by bending legs and spine. Same as Crouching.

Standing. Remaining on one's feet in an upright position at a workstation without moving about.

Stooping. Bending body downward and forward by bending spine at the waist, requiring full use of the lower extremities and back muscles.

Substitution Pattern. The act, process, or result of [substituting](#) a biomechanical motion for another.

Sustained posture. A posture that is maintained for a specified amount of time continuously without interruption.

Talking. Expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word to impart oral information to clients or to the public and to convey detailed spoken instructions to other workers accurately, loudly, or quickly.

Tasting/Smelling. Distinguishing with a degree of accuracy, differences or similarities in intensity or quality of flavors or odors, or recognizing particular flavors or odors, using tongue or nose.

Temperaments. The adaptability requirements made on the worker by specific types of job situations. Temperaments relate to worker personality traits and can impact long term job retention. There are 11 different temperaments relative to work: 1) Directing, controlling, or planning activities of others; 2) Performing repetitive or short-cycle work; 3) Influencing people in their opinions, attitudes, and judgments; 4) Performing a variety of duties; 5) Expressing personal feelings; 6) Working alone or apart in physical isolation from others; 7) Performing effectively under stress; 8) Attaining precise set limits, tolerances, and standards; 9) Working under specific instructions; 10) Dealing with people; and 11) Making judgments and decisions.

Tolerance. A psychophysical concept that refers to the level of work or activity an individual feels able to endure at a given time. Tolerance is impacted by an individual's symptoms such as pain and fatigue.

Transferrable skills. Skills that an individual developed from past work that can be used in other similar work (transferability) based on worker traits to include specific vocational preparation, work fields, and materials used, products produced, and subject matter or services provided.

Unskilled work (levels 1-2). Work requiring short demonstration only (level 1) or anything beyond short demonstration up to and including 1 month (level 2) for the worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation.

Valid performance. The individual's test performance was consistent with the severity of their medically determinable impairments based on biomechanical, physiological, and psychophysical factors.

Very heavy work. Exerting in excess of 100 pounds of force occasionally, or in excess of 50 pounds of force frequently, or in excess of 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

Vibration. Exposure to a shaking object or surface.

Visual accommodation. Adjustment of lens of eye to bring an object into sharp focus. This factor is required when doing near point at varying distances from the eye.

Walking. Moving about on foot.

Wet and/or humid. Contact with water or other liquids or exposure to non-weather-related humid conditions.

Work behavior. An activity performed to achieve the objectives of the job. Work behaviors involve observable (physical) components and unobservable (mental) components. A work behavior consists of the performance of one or more tasks. Knowledges, skills, and abilities are not behaviors, although they may be applied in work behaviors.

Work fields. Groupings of technologies and socioeconomic objectives that reflect how work gets done and what gets done as a result of the work activities of a job, or in other words, the purpose of the job. There are 96 work fields defined by USES.

Worker characteristics. Worker attributes that contribute to successful job performance. Worker characteristics include: 1) General Educational Development (GED); 2) Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP); 3) Aptitudes; 4) Temperaments; 5) GOE (Interest Areas); 6) Physical Demands; and 7) Environmental Conditions.

Working in high, exposed places. Exposure to possible bodily injury from falling.

Working with explosives. Exposure to possible bodily injury from explosion.