

# Modified Ashworth Scale

## A test to measure spasticity

### What's the purpose?

The Modified Ashworth Scale measures spasticity (tightening or stiffening of the muscles). People who experience stroke, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, or other conditions that affect the brain and nervous system may have spasticity.

Spasticity is caused by an increase in muscle tone, which means that muscles feel flexed and tight even when they are at rest. A person with high muscle tone may have a harder time moving their arms and legs when and where they want to. This can be painful and impact quality of life.

The Modified Ashworth Scale can be used to measure current levels of spasticity and track change over time.

### What do I have to do?

While you are relaxed, the tester will move your hand, arm, foot or leg in both directions. They will first do this slowly, and then quickly. The tester will be looking at how much your body parts resist the movement. They will also see how tight or flexed the muscles feel.



### What does my score mean?

The scale from 0-4 shows how much resistance your muscle has when it is moved quickly by the tester. Higher scores mean that there may be spasticity.



#### No spasticity

There is no resistance in the muscle when moved quickly. The body part moves freely.



#### High spasticity

There is a lot of resistance in the muscle when moved quickly. The body part does not move freely.

*Have a conversation with your therapist about what the results mean for you.*

To see a full summary of this instrument and more, visit [sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures](http://sralab.org/rehabilitation-measures).  
Questions? Email [rehabmeasures@sralab.org](mailto:rehabmeasures@sralab.org) or call 312.238.2802

