

Scoring of OPTIMAL

The Outpatient Physical Therapy Improvement in Movement Assessment Log (OPTIMAL) is an instrument that measures difficulty and self-confidence in performing 21 movements that a patient/client needs to accomplish in order to do various functional activities.

Scoring is relatively simple, and it can be done in three different ways. The most expedient way to calculate a **total score** is to sum the responses (marked on a 1 to 5 scale) across all 21 items on difficulty and on self-confidence upon both the patient's/client's admission (baseline) and discharge from physical therapy (final). Then subtract the final sum from the baseline sum. The higher the change score, the more the patient has improved. If a particular item on the OPTIMAL is marked as "Not Applicable," then this item should be dropped completely from the overall scoring. For example, suppose that one item is marked "Not Applicable." The best possible score on "Difficulty" or "Self-confidence" for this patient would be "20" (1 x 20 items) and the worst possible score would be "100" (5 x 20 items). Do not add "9" to the score ("9" is an arbitrary coding convention to distinguish the item from missing data if you are entering information into a database.)

Psychometric testing of the instrument also determined that the 21 items form three subscales: upper extremity, lower extremity; and trunk mobility. For some patients, it may be helpful to analyze changes in difficulty or self-confidence in performing specific movements by calculating a **subscale score** as well as a total score.

Finally, the instrument includes a question that asks the patient/client, "From the above list [referring to the 21 items], choose the 3 activities you would most like to be able to do without any difficulty," which may also provide clinically meaningful information. The therapist can calculate a specific **item score** to appraise the changes between admission and discharge scores on these three items. This scoring method allows the therapist to determine the outcome of treatment on the ability to perform the movements that were most important to the patient/client. This method particularly aids in the clinical decision-making process.

For more information about the psychometric properties of OPTIMAL, as well as discussing its scoring, please contact the Division of Practice and Research at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

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