

NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINATION (NPTE) PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What effect does prolonged exposure to high cortisol levels have on the body?**
 - A. Increased muscle mass
 - B. Weight gain
 - C. Improved sleep patterns
 - D. Decreased appetite
- 2. Which of the following best defines cellulitis?**
 - A. An infection of the dermis and subcutaneous tissue
 - B. The presence of dried fragments of sloughed dead epidermis
 - C. The presence of a dermal or subcutaneous solid and elevated lesion
 - D. Inflammation of the dermis
- 3. What is the most critical adaptation for a wheelchair ordered for an elderly patient post-total hip arthroplasty surgery?**
 - A. Adjustable armrests
 - B. Elevating adjustable leg rests
 - C. A solid seat
 - D. Anti-tip attachments
- 4. What vital sign is expected to remain normal in patients with chronic respiratory disease?**
 - A. Blood pressure
 - B. Heart rate
 - C. Respiratory rate
 - D. Oxygen saturation
- 5. Which characteristic is commonly associated with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)?**
 - A. Increased lung expansion
 - B. Decreased lung capacity
 - C. Improved respiratory function
 - D. Normal pulmonary function tests

- 6. For a patient with excessive lordosis experiencing low back pain, what is the MOST appropriate primary intervention?**
- A. Strengthen the lower back extensors
 - B. Anterior pelvic tilt exercises
 - C. Use a back support in the form of a corset or brace
 - D. Strengthen the abdominal muscles
- 7. What should an appropriate exercise regimen include for a patient in the coronary care unit two days after coronary artery bypass surgery?**
- A. Ankle pumps and marching in place while seated, at an intensity to increase the heart rate 10-15 beats over resting level
 - B. Ankle pumps and heel slides to increase the heart rate by 15 beats over resting level
 - C. Shoulder flexion and abduction with a three-pound weight at an intensity to increase the heart rate by 15-25 beats per minute
 - D. Exercises that increase the heart rate by 30 beats over resting level, such as upper extremity exercises using a one-pound weight
- 8. How might an elderly patient with a stage III pressure ulcer differ from a younger patient with the same ulcer?**
- A. Decreased vascular and immune responses
 - B. Increased scarring with healing
 - C. Increased elasticity and eccrine sweating
 - D. Increased vascular responses with erythema
- 9. What conclusion can be drawn if a wound dressing shows purulent exudate of moderate amount with an odor?**
- A. Normal wound healing
 - B. Lack of blood flow
 - C. Compartment syndrome
 - D. Infection
- 10. Which wrist motion is likely decreased if there is a reduction in the anterior glide of the carpals at the radiocarpal joint?**
- A. Wrist flexion
 - B. Ulnar deviation
 - C. Radial deviation
 - D. Wrist extension

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. B
4. D
5. B
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. D
10. D

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Explanations

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1. What effect does prolonged exposure to high cortisol levels have on the body?

- A. Increased muscle mass
- B. Weight gain**
- C. Improved sleep patterns
- D. Decreased appetite

Prolonged exposure to high cortisol levels is primarily associated with weight gain due to a combination of factors. Cortisol, which is a stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands, influences metabolism, appetite, and fat storage. When cortisol levels remain elevated over time, it can lead to an increase in appetite and cravings for high-calorie foods, particularly those high in sugar and fat. Additionally, cortisol promotes the storage of fat, especially in the abdominal area, which contributes to overall weight gain. While high cortisol levels can also lead to muscle breakdown and other health issues, the most notable effect is an increase in body weight as a result of increased fat storage and altered metabolism. Other options, like improved sleep patterns and decreased appetite, contradict the well-documented effects of chronic stress and elevated cortisol levels. Typically, high cortisol is associated with sleep disturbances and a likely increase in appetite rather than a decrease.

2. Which of the following best defines cellulitis?

- A. An infection of the dermis and subcutaneous tissue**
- B. The presence of dried fragments of sloughed dead epidermis
- C. The presence of a dermal or subcutaneous solid and elevated lesion
- D. Inflammation of the dermis

Cellulitis is best defined as an infection of the dermis and subcutaneous tissue. This condition typically arises when bacteria, often stemming from a cut, scratch, or other breach in the skin, invade these deeper layers. The infection leads to red, swollen areas on the skin, which may feel warm and tender. It is essential to recognize that cellulitis affects both the dermis—the layer of skin beneath the outermost layer—and the subcutaneous tissue, which consists of fat and connective tissue. Understanding this definition helps to distinguish cellulitis from other skin conditions. For instance, the presence of dried fragments of sloughed dead epidermis relates more to conditions like necrosis or crusting rather than an active infection. Similarly, a dermal or subcutaneous solid and elevated lesion describes a different issue, such as a nodule or cyst, which does not necessarily imply an infection. Lastly, while inflammation of the dermis can occur in various dermatological conditions, it does not specifically address the infective nature nor the depth of tissue involved in cellulitis. Therefore, recognizing that cellulitis encompasses both an infection and its localization to the dermis and subcutaneous tissue is crucial for accurate identification and treatment.

3. What is the most critical adaptation for a wheelchair ordered for an elderly patient post-total hip arthroplasty surgery?

- A. Adjustable armrests
- B. Elevating adjustable leg rests**
- C. A solid seat
- D. Anti-tip attachments

After total hip arthroplasty surgery, patients must adhere to specific precautions to prevent dislocation and ensure proper healing. Elevating adjustable leg rests are particularly critical for elderly patients because they provide several important benefits in this context. Firstly, these leg rests can help manage edema, which is a common concern in post-surgical patients. Elevation can assist in reducing swelling in the lower extremities, which is essential for recovery. Additionally, adjustable leg rests allow for the customization of the wheelchair to accommodate the patient's specific physical needs and comfort level, taking into account any limitations in range of motion they may experience due to their surgery. Furthermore, maintaining proper positioning is crucial for a patient recovering from hip surgery. Elevating the legs can help prevent complications such as pressure ulcers and improve circulation. It also encourages optimal posture, which can be more challenging for elderly patients, especially if they have comorbid conditions that affect their overall mobility or balance. In contrast, other adaptations like adjustable armrests, a solid seat, and anti-tip attachments, while beneficial in certain circumstances, do not directly address the unique challenges of recovery after hip arthroplasty as effectively as elevating adjustable leg rests do. Thus, in this specific scenario, the focus on comfort,

4. What vital sign is expected to remain normal in patients with chronic respiratory disease?

- A. Blood pressure
- B. Heart rate
- C. Respiratory rate
- D. Oxygen saturation**

In patients with chronic respiratory disease, oxygen saturation is expected to remain normal in certain contexts, especially when the disease is stable and adequately managed. Chronic respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma, can lead to fluctuations in other vital signs like heart rate and respiratory rate due to factors like exertion, anxiety, or acute exacerbations. Blood pressure may also vary based on overall cardiovascular health and activity levels but is not directly affected by respiratory status. Oxygen saturation represents the percentage of hemoglobin binding sites in the bloodstream occupied by oxygen. In a well-managed patient with chronic respiratory disease, the body may adapt over time to maintain near-normal levels of oxygen saturation through mechanisms such as increased red blood cell production or improved efficiency in oxygen utilization. However, it's important to note that during exacerbations or in poorly controlled cases, oxygen saturation could be compromised, but the question is focused on patients who are stable. Thus, maintaining a normal oxygen saturation level reflects appropriate management and adaptation to the chronic condition.

5. Which characteristic is commonly associated with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)?

- A. Increased lung expansion
- B. Decreased lung capacity**
- C. Improved respiratory function
- D. Normal pulmonary function tests

In amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), one of the hallmark features is the progressive degeneration of motor neurons, which can lead to significant respiratory complications due to weakness of the respiratory muscles. As the disease progresses, patients often experience a decrease in lung capacity because the muscles responsible for breathing, including the diaphragm and intercostal muscles, become weakened. This muscle weakness results in a reduced ability to take deep breaths and fully expand the lungs, ultimately leading to hypoventilation and impaired gas exchange. Lung function tests in ALS typically reveal a restrictive pattern, characterized by decreased vital capacity and total lung capacity. This decreased lung capacity is a major concern in ALS management, as it can lead to respiratory failure, necessitating further medical interventions such as ventilatory support. In contrast, characteristics such as increased lung expansion, improved respiratory function, or normal pulmonary function tests do not align with the typical progression of ALS. These would suggest an absence of respiratory muscle involvement, which is not typical of the disease. Thus, decreased lung capacity is indeed the characteristic commonly associated with ALS.

6. For a patient with excessive lordosis experiencing low back pain, what is the MOST appropriate primary intervention?

- A. Strengthen the lower back extensors
- B. Anterior pelvic tilt exercises
- C. Use a back support in the form of a corset or brace**
- D. Strengthen the abdominal muscles

The most appropriate primary intervention for a patient with excessive lordosis experiencing low back pain is to strengthen the abdominal muscles. This intervention is essential as it addresses the muscle imbalances often associated with lordosis. In cases of excessive lordosis, the hip flexors and lower back extensors tend to be tight while the abdominal muscles may be weak. By focusing on strengthening the abdominal muscles, the intervention helps restore proper pelvic alignment and reduce the excessive curvature of the lumbar spine. Additionally, improving core stability through abdominal strengthening can alleviate the stress on the lower back, potentially decreasing pain. This method can also facilitate better posture and functional movement patterns, which are crucial for long-term management of low back pain related to lordotic posture. While the other options may provide some benefit, strengthening the abdominal muscles specifically addresses the biomechanical causes of excessive lordosis and low back pain, making it the most targeted and effective intervention for this condition.

7. What should an appropriate exercise regimen include for a patient in the coronary care unit two days after coronary artery bypass surgery?

- A. Ankle pumps and marching in place while seated, at an intensity to increase the heart rate 10-15 beats over resting level**
- B. Ankle pumps and heel slides to increase the heart rate by 15 beats over resting level
- C. Shoulder flexion and abduction with a three-pound weight at an intensity to increase the heart rate by 15-25 beats per minute
- D. Exercises that increase the heart rate by 30 beats over resting level, such as upper extremity exercises using a one-pound weight

An effective exercise regimen for a patient who has just undergone coronary artery bypass surgery should prioritize safety, gradual progression, and appropriate intensity to ensure cardiovascular stability during recovery. In this case, the chosen answer focuses on ankle pumps and seated marching, which are foundational exercises suitable for a patient within the first few days post-surgery. Ankle pumps and seated marching are low-impact, low-intensity activities that promote circulation and help prevent complications such as deep vein thrombosis without putting undue stress on the heart. This is particularly important as the patient is still in the acute phase of recovery, and their body needs to adapt to the surgical intervention. By recommending activities that increase the heart rate by a modest 10-15 beats over the resting level, the regimen adheres to safety guidelines that consider the patient's cardiovascular status and overall condition. In contrast, other options suggest exercises that involve higher intensity levels or weights, which may not be appropriate for a patient so soon after surgery. Increasing heart rate by 15 beats or more can exert unnecessary strain on the cardiovascular system and is likely inappropriate unless specifically cleared by a physician. Additionally, using weights for exercises like shoulder flexion and abduction can add stress that the patient may not yet be ready to handle, making the selected

8. How might an elderly patient with a stage III pressure ulcer differ from a younger patient with the same ulcer?

- A. Decreased vascular and immune responses**
- B. Increased scarring with healing
- C. Increased elasticity and eccrine sweating
- D. Increased vascular responses with erythema

An elderly patient with a stage III pressure ulcer is likely to exhibit decreased vascular and immune responses compared to a younger patient with the same ulcer. As individuals age, various physiological changes occur, such as reduced blood flow and impaired wound healing mechanisms. The vascular system often becomes less efficient, leading to decreased perfusion at the cellular level. Additionally, the immune response in older adults can be blunted, which affects the body's ability to respond to infection and inflammation, both of which are critical in the healing process of pressure ulcers. This diminished response can contribute to prolonged wound healing times and may increase the risk of complications such as infections. In contrast, younger patients generally have better vascularity and a more robust immune system, which supports more efficient wound healing and recovery. In understanding the context of the other choices, increased scarring with healing might be more pronounced in some populations, and increased elasticity and eccrine sweating would typically be associated with younger skin. The statement regarding increased vascular responses with erythema does not align with the known vascular changes associated with aging, which typically reflect a decrease rather than an increase in vascular response.

9. What conclusion can be drawn if a wound dressing shows purulent exudate of moderate amount with an odor?

- A. Normal wound healing
- B. Lack of blood flow
- C. Compartment syndrome

D. Infection

The presence of purulent exudate, especially when it is of a moderate amount and accompanied by an odor, strongly indicates that there is an infection in the wound. Purulent exudate is typically a sign of infection as it contains pus, which consists of dead white blood cells, bacteria, and tissue debris. When a wound exhibits these characteristics, it is a signal that the body's immune response is actively fighting off infection in the area. In contrast to normal wound healing, which would exhibit a serous or clear exudate without odor, the presence of purulent exudate signifies a pathological process. An absence of blood flow could lead to poor healing or necrosis but does not specifically produce purulent exudate with odor. Compartment syndrome is a condition caused by increased pressure within a muscle compartment and is unrelated to the nature of exudate or infections in wounds. Therefore, the conclusion that best fits the described scenario is that the wound is infected.

10. Which wrist motion is likely decreased if there is a reduction in the anterior glide of the carpals at the radiocarpal joint?

- A. Wrist flexion
- B. Ulnar deviation
- C. Radial deviation

D. Wrist extension

When considering wrist motion, particularly at the radiocarpal joint, understanding the mechanics of carpal movements is essential. The anterior glide of the carpals at the radiocarpal joint primarily facilitates wrist extension. During this motion, the distal radius and the proximal row of carpals need to glide anteriorly to allow for greater extension at the wrist. A reduction in the anterior glide of the carpals means that the main movement contributing to wrist extension is impaired. As a result, reaching full extension would be difficult, reflecting a decrease in this specific wrist motion. Therefore, if the anterior glide at the radiocarpal joint is compromised, it leads directly to a decreased capacity for wrist extension. In contrast, wrist flexion, ulnar deviation, and radial deviation involve different mechanics and do not directly hinge on the anterior glide of the carpals for their range of motion. Each of these motions involves varying degrees of carpal movement but is less directly affected by limitations in anterior glide compared to wrist extension.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

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We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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