

Orthopedic Certified Specialist (OCS) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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

- 1. Which anatomical structure is at risk of being compressed in exertional compartment syndrome?**
 - A. Femoral nerve**
 - B. Deep peroneal nerve**
 - C. Common peroneal nerve**
 - D. Tibial nerve**
- 2. Which condition may require immediate cervical surgery due to severe neurological compression risk?**
 - A. Degenerative Disc Disease**
 - B. RA with acute instability**
 - C. Chronic Cervical Strain**
 - D. Osteoarthritis**
- 3. What is the standard treatment recommendation for managing acute cervical pain after a motor vehicle accident?**
 - A. Immediate surgery**
 - B. Rest and gradual return to activity**
 - C. Long-term mobilization therapy**
 - D. Continuous physical therapy**
- 4. Which position tends to reproduce symptoms of Bassett's lesion?**
 - A. Elbow flexion and pronation**
 - B. Elbow extension and pronation**
 - C. Shoulder flexion and lateral rotation**
 - D. Shoulder adduction and internal rotation**
- 5. Which physical assessment technique is useful for evaluating scapular dyskinesia?**
 - A. Visual inspection with static posture assessment**
 - B. Dynamic motion analysis during shoulder movements**
 - C. Palpation of the rotator cuff muscles**
 - D. Measurement of shoulder range of motion**

- 6. What ligament prevents the dens of the axis from pressing on the spinal cord during active cervical flexion?**
- A. Anterior longitudinal ligament**
 - B. Transverse ligament**
 - C. Ligamentum flavum**
 - D. Interspinous ligament**
- 7. Which nerve innervates both the teres major and subscapularis muscles?**
- A. Upper subscapular nerve**
 - B. Lower subscapular nerve**
 - C. Thoracodorsal nerve**
 - D. Suprascapular nerve**
- 8. The special test most likely to detect an injury of the anterior bundle of the anterior cruciate ligament is the _____.**
- A. Pivot Shift Test**
 - B. Lachman Test**
 - C. Anteroposterior Drawer Test**
 - D. Anterior Drawer Test**
- 9. According to the Guide to Physical Therapy Practice, how is a patient's difficulty in grasping objects classified?**
- A. Impairment**
 - B. Activity Limitation**
 - C. Participation Restriction**
 - D. Disability**
- 10. A patient with diffuse cervical pain and bilateral numbness is likely suffering from which condition?**
- A. Cervical Radiculopathy**
 - B. Cervical Myelopathy**
 - C. Thoracic Outlet Syndrome**
 - D. Cervical Spondylosis**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which anatomical structure is at risk of being compressed in exertional compartment syndrome?

- A. Femoral nerve
- B. Deep peroneal nerve**
- C. Common peroneal nerve
- D. Tibial nerve

In exertional compartment syndrome, the anatomical structure most at risk of compression is the deep peroneal nerve. This condition occurs when the pressure within a closed muscle space rises, leading to decreased blood flow and potential nerve and muscle damage. In the anterior compartment of the lower leg, where the deep peroneal nerve resides, activities that increase muscle volume, such as running or strenuous exercise, can lead to significant increases in compartment pressure. The deep peroneal nerve innervates muscles responsible for ankle dorsiflexion and toe extension. As the muscle fascia does not stretch, the increased pressure can compromise blood flow and nerve function, resulting in symptoms such as pain, weakness, and numbness in the affected area. While other nerves may be anatomically close to different compartments, the deep peroneal nerve is the most closely associated with the anterior compartment, which is commonly affected by exertional compartment syndrome. Therefore, identifying this nerve highlights the risks associated with muscle swelling and the importance of timely intervention to prevent complications.

2. Which condition may require immediate cervical surgery due to severe neurological compression risk?

- A. Degenerative Disc Disease
- B. RA with acute instability**
- C. Chronic Cervical Strain
- D. Osteoarthritis

The need for immediate cervical surgery arises primarily in cases where there is a significant risk of severe neurological compression. In the case of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) with acute instability, patients may develop atlantoaxial instability due to inflammatory changes in the cervical spine. This instability can lead to compression of the spinal cord or nerve roots, resulting in potential neurological deficits such as weakness, numbness, or even paralysis. The urgency of surgical intervention in RA with acute instability is driven by the acute nature of the instability and the potential for rapid deterioration of neurological function if compression is not alleviated swiftly. Early intervention is critical to prevent irreversible damage to the neural structures. In contrast, conditions such as degenerative disc disease, chronic cervical strain, and osteoarthritis typically pose less immediate risk for severe neurological compromise and often benefit from conservative treatment before considering surgical options. Therefore, RA with acute instability is recognized as a condition that requires prompt surgical evaluation and intervention to protect neurological integrity.

3. What is the standard treatment recommendation for managing acute cervical pain after a motor vehicle accident?

- A. Immediate surgery**
- B. Rest and gradual return to activity**
- C. Long-term mobilization therapy**
- D. Continuous physical therapy**

The standard treatment recommendation for managing acute cervical pain after a motor vehicle accident is to initiate rest and a gradual return to activity. This approach is grounded in the concept of allowing the injured tissues time to heal, while also preventing the negative consequences associated with prolonged inactivity. After an acute injury, providing immediate rest helps to minimize pain and inflammation. However, complete immobilization is generally not advised for extended periods as it can lead to muscle weakness and stiffness. Therefore, once the initial acute pain subsides, a gradual increase in activities is encouraged to promote flexibility and strength, as well as to facilitate a quicker recovery. This strategy allows for a functional return to daily activities and reduces the risk of chronic pain development. In contrast, more aggressive approaches such as immediate surgery are typically reserved for cases with structural damage or persistent neurological symptoms that warrant surgical intervention. Long-term mobilization therapy and continuous physical therapy might be beneficial in chronic scenarios but are not primary interventions for the acute phase of a cervical injury following a motor vehicle accident. Thus, a balanced approach of rest and a guided return to activity is seen as the most effective strategy for managing acute cervical pain.

4. Which position tends to reproduce symptoms of Bassett's lesion?

- A. Elbow flexion and pronation**
- B. Elbow extension and pronation**
- C. Shoulder flexion and lateral rotation**
- D. Shoulder adduction and internal rotation**

Bassett's lesion is associated with an entrapment of the ulnar nerve at the elbow, particularly at the cubital tunnel. The position that tends to reproduce symptoms of this lesion involves a combination of elbow extension and pronation. In this position, the ulnar nerve becomes more taut as it travels through the cubital tunnel, potentially exacerbating symptoms such as tingling or numbness in the ulnar nerve distribution, which includes the ring and little fingers. Elbow extension creates tension on the ulnar nerve, while pronation may further contribute to entrapment as the nerve slides over the medial epicondyle. This combination of movements can aggravate the symptoms associated with Bassett's lesion, making it a crucial position to assess when examining for ulnar nerve entrapment. Understanding this relationship helps guide both clinical assessment and appropriate treatment strategies for patients experiencing these symptoms.

5. Which physical assessment technique is useful for evaluating scapular dyskinesia?

- A. Visual inspection with static posture assessment**
- B. Dynamic motion analysis during shoulder movements**
- C. Palpation of the rotator cuff muscles**
- D. Measurement of shoulder range of motion**

Dynamic motion analysis during shoulder movements is the most suitable technique for evaluating scapular dyskinesia because it allows for real-time observation of scapular mechanics in conjunction with shoulder joint motions. This assessment provides insight into how the scapula moves during various activities, which is essential for identifying any abnormal motion patterns or imbalances. Scapular dyskinesia often manifests during dynamic activities such as reaching, lifting, or overhead movements, making this method crucial for assessing its impact on shoulder function. While other techniques like visual inspection can offer a snapshot of the static position, they may not capture the complexities of motion and movement dynamics that are pivotal for diagnosing dyskinesia. Palpation of the rotator cuff muscles primarily assesses muscle tenderness or strength but does not provide insight into scapular motion patterns. Additionally, measuring shoulder range of motion can indicate limitations or restrictions but does not directly assess how the scapula is functioning or moving in relation to the humerus. Thus, dynamic motion analysis is integral for comprehensive evaluation and understanding of scapular dyskinesia.

6. What ligament prevents the dens of the axis from pressing on the spinal cord during active cervical flexion?

- A. Anterior longitudinal ligament**
- B. Transverse ligament**
- C. Ligamentum flavum**
- D. Interspinous ligament**

The transverse ligament is crucial in maintaining the stability of the atlantoaxial joint and preventing the dens of the axis from compromising the spinal cord during active cervical flexion. This ligament encircles the dens and attaches to the lateral masses of the atlas (C1), forming a strong arch that holds the dens in place. As the cervical spine flexes, without the support of the transverse ligament, the dens could potentially move anteriorly and impinge on the spinal cord, leading to serious neurological consequences. The transverse ligament's role is to secure the dens, allowing for safe movement of the head and neck while safeguarding the delicate structures of the spinal cord. Other ligaments, such as the anterior longitudinal ligament, ligamentum flavum, and interspinous ligament, play different roles within the spinal column, including limiting spinal extension, providing support between vertebrae, and aiding in the stability of the spinal column, but they do not have the specific function of securing the dens during flexion like the transverse ligament does.

7. Which nerve innervates both the teres major and subscapularis muscles?

- A. Upper subscapular nerve**
- B. Lower subscapular nerve**
- C. Thoracodorsal nerve**
- D. Suprascapular nerve**

The correct answer is based on the anatomy and innervation of the muscles in question. The teres major and subscapularis muscles are both innervated by the lower subscapular nerve, which arises from the posterior cord of the brachial plexus. This nerve specifically serves to provide motor innervation to these two muscles, facilitating their functions in shoulder movement and stabilization. The teres major is responsible for actions such as internal rotation, adduction, and extension of the humerus, while the subscapularis plays a critical role in internal rotation and stabilization of the shoulder joint. The lower subscapular nerve's role in activating these muscles is essential for shoulder mechanics. To understand the context of the other options: the upper subscapular nerve innervates only the upper part of the subscapularis; the thoracodorsal nerve innervates the latissimus dorsi; and the suprascapular nerve primarily innervates the supraspinatus and infraspinatus muscles. These nerves do not contribute to the innervation of the teres major, reinforcing the specificity of the lower subscapular nerve's function in this case. Thus, the selection of

8. The special test most likely to detect an injury of the anterior bundle of the anterior cruciate ligament is the _____.

- A. Pivot Shift Test**
- B. Lachman Test**
- C. Anteroposterior Drawer Test**
- D. Anterior Drawer Test**

The Anterior Drawer Test is particularly effective for assessing the integrity of the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), especially the anterior bundle. This test specifically evaluates the anterior translation of the tibia relative to the femur when the knee is flexed at approximately 90 degrees. A positive test indicates excess anterior movement, suggesting a potential injury to the ACL. The anterior bundle of the ACL is critical for preventing anterior tibial translation and providing rotational stability to the knee. Since the Anterior Drawer Test directly examines this aspect, it is the most relevant clinical test for identifying injuries to this particular facet of the ligament. The Pivot Shift Test is primarily used to assess the overall stability of the knee and is more indicative of rotational instability often associated with both bundles of the ACL. The Lachman Test also evaluates the ACL but is typically used to assess both the anterior and posterior bundles rather than isolating the anterior bundle. The Anteroposterior Drawer Test, though similar in assessing translation, is typically less sensitive than the Anterior Drawer Test in detecting subtle injuries to the anterior bundle specifically.

9. According to the Guide to Physical Therapy Practice, how is a patient's difficulty in grasping objects classified?

A. Impairment

B. Activity Limitation

C. Participation Restriction

D. Disability

A patient's difficulty in grasping objects is classified as an activity limitation based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework, which is foundational to the Guide to Physical Therapy Practice. Activity limitations refer to difficulties encountered by an individual in executing tasks or actions. In this case, the inability or difficulty in grasping objects relates directly to the performance of a specific activity, such as holding a pen, picking up a cup, or managing tools. This classification focuses on the functional aspect of what the individual can and cannot do due to their condition, distinguishing it from impairments, which refer to problems in body function or structure, and participation restrictions, which deal with challenges in involvement in societal roles or life situations. Disability is a broader term that often encompasses significant impairments or activity limitations but does not specifically describe the functional challenges in daily activities. Therefore, identifying this situation as an activity limitation aligns accurately with the definitions and classifications outlined in the Guide to Physical Therapy Practice.

10. A patient with diffuse cervical pain and bilateral numbness is likely suffering from which condition?

A. Cervical Radiculopathy

B. Cervical Myelopathy

C. Thoracic Outlet Syndrome

D. Cervical Spondylosis

A patient presenting with diffuse cervical pain and bilateral numbness is likely experiencing cervical myelopathy due to the nature of their symptoms. Cervical myelopathy results from compression of the spinal cord in the cervical region, leading to a variety of neurological symptoms. The bilateral numbness indicates that both sides of the body are affected, which is characteristic of spinal cord involvement rather than isolated nerve root issues typically seen in cervical radiculopathy. Cervical myelopathy often presents with other signs such as weakness in the hands or legs, difficulty with coordination, and potential changes in bladder or bowel function, which can also accompany bilateral numbness. The diffuse cervical pain adds to the picture, as the compression can create a broad area of discomfort throughout the neck. Understanding this condition highlights the importance of recognizing the bilateral nature of symptoms when assessing cervical spine issues, as it points towards central nervous system involvement rather than peripheral nerve dysfunction.

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:

<https://orthopedicocs.examzify.com>

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