

# Saunders Musculoskeletal Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Use This Guide</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Questions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Answers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Explanations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>16</b>

SAMPLE

# 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. In what position should a client's leg be placed after a plaster cast is applied?**
  - A. Flat on the ground**
  - B. Elevated on pillows**
  - C. Hanging down off the bed**
  - D. At heart level**
- 2. Before teaching a client how to use crutches, which assessment should take priority?**
  - A. Client's prior experience with crutches**
  - B. Client's vital signs, muscle strength, and previous activity level**
  - C. Client's knowledge about their injury**
  - D. Client's emotional readiness to use crutches**
- 3. What type of wound care will be prescribed for a client who underwent fasciotomy for compartment syndrome?**
  - A. Dry dressing changes**
  - B. Moist sterile saline dressings**
  - C. Antibacterial ointment application**
  - D. Hydrocolloid dressing application**
- 4. What should the nurse monitor for a client with lower extremity fractures in traction?**
  - A. Body temperature**
  - B. Overall mobility**
  - C. Skin integrity**
  - D. Fluid intake**
- 5. What factor is MOST likely to increase pain in a patient with low back pain?**
  - A. Resting**
  - B. Bending**
  - C. Applying ice**
  - D. Stretching exercises**

**6. After a client is diagnosed with a sprained ankle, which self-care measure shows an understanding of next steps?**

- A. "I should apply heat to the ankle to soothe it."**
- B. "I should elevate my foot above the level of the heart."**
- C. "I should walk on it to keep it flexible."**
- D. "I should avoid any weight-bearing activities."**

**7. What indicates a complete understanding of measures to relieve itching under a cast?**

- A. "I should scratch the area outside of the cast."**
- B. "I can use a hair dryer on the low setting."**
- C. "I should apply lotion directly into the cast."**
- D. "I will remove the cast if it itches."**

**8. What is a common complication associated with osteoporosis that should be monitored?**

- A. Muscle cramps**
- B. Fractures**
- C. Joint swelling**
- D. Skin lesions**

**9. Which statement would prompt the unit nurse to modify the home environment for a client discharged after spinal fusion?**

- A. My job requires me to stand for long periods.**
- B. My bedroom and bathroom are on the second floor of my home.**
- C. My family can help with daily tasks.**
- D. I have a walk-in shower at home.**

**10. What indicates a proper understanding of the care instructions for a new cast?**

- A. "I can remove the cast if it itches."**
- B. "I should keep the cast dry and clean."**
- C. "I may use a heating pad to ease discomfort."**
- D. "I should not move my fingers in the cast."**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. In what position should a client's leg be placed after a plaster cast is applied?**

- A. Flat on the ground**
- B. Elevated on pillows**
- C. Hanging down off the bed**
- D. At heart level**

After the application of a plaster cast, it is essential to elevate the affected leg on pillows. This position helps to reduce swelling by promoting venous return and limiting fluid accumulation in the extremity. Elevation is particularly crucial during the initial hours and days following cast application, as swelling often occurs due to immobilization and injury. Keeping the leg elevated minimizes discomfort and can also help enhance circulation to the area, which is important for proper healing. On the other hand, positions such as laying flat on the ground could increase swelling and discomfort, while letting the leg hang down could exacerbate those issues. Having the leg at heart level may not effectively address swelling in the same way elevation does. Therefore, placing the leg on pillows provides the best environment for recovery post-cast application.

**2. Before teaching a client how to use crutches, which assessment should take priority?**

- A. Client's prior experience with crutches**
- B. Client's vital signs, muscle strength, and previous activity level**
- C. Client's knowledge about their injury**
- D. Client's emotional readiness to use crutches**

The priority assessment before teaching a client how to use crutches is evaluating the client's vital signs, muscle strength, and previous activity level. This assessment is crucial because it provides valuable insights into the client's physical capabilities and limitations, which directly impact their ability to use crutches safely and effectively. Understanding the client's vital signs ensures that they are stable enough for physical activity, as any abnormalities could indicate potential complications. Assessing muscle strength is essential as it helps determine whether the client has sufficient strength in their upper arms, shoulders, and hands to support their weight while maneuvering with crutches. Evaluating previous activity levels gives an indication of the client's baseline functional status and readiness to engage in activities that require balance and coordination, which are critical when using crutches. These factors contribute significantly to safe ambulation and rehabilitation, making this assessment a fundamental step before initiating crutch training. Other factors like prior experience, knowledge of the injury, and emotional readiness are also important, but they do not provide the immediate necessary information regarding the client's physical capacity to handle crutches, which is the main concern during the initial assessment.

**3. What type of wound care will be prescribed for a client who underwent fasciotomy for compartment syndrome?**

- A. Dry dressing changes**
- B. Moist sterile saline dressings**
- C. Antibacterial ointment application**
- D. Hydrocolloid dressing application**

For a client who has undergone a fasciotomy due to compartment syndrome, the prescribed wound care typically involves the use of moist sterile saline dressings. This approach is crucial because it helps to maintain a moist environment around the wound, which can promote healing and reduce the risk of infection. The moist saline dressings also assist in the debridement of necrotic tissue and prevent the wound from drying out, which can lead to complications such as scabbing and impaired healing. Moist dressings create an optimal healing environment by facilitating cell migration and growth, both of which are essential in the aftermath of surgical intervention for conditions like compartment syndrome. Additionally, using sterile saline helps to keep the wound clean and minimizes the risk of contamination, making it an appropriate choice for managing surgical wounds where infection is a concern. Other methods of wound care, such as dry dressing changes, might not provide the same level of moisture retention and may contribute to drying out of the wound. Antibacterial ointment application has a role in certain situations, but it is not always appropriate immediately after fasciotomy, where the focus is on ensuring a moist healing environment. Hydrocolloid dressings can be beneficial in certain types of wounds but may not be suitable immediately post-surgery

**4. What should the nurse monitor for a client with lower extremity fractures in traction?**

- A. Body temperature**
- B. Overall mobility**
- C. Skin integrity**
- D. Fluid intake**

Monitoring skin integrity is crucial for a client with lower extremity fractures in traction because the use of traction devices can place continuous pressure on certain areas of the skin. This can lead to complications such as pressure ulcers or skin breakdown, particularly if the patient is immobile or if there is any friction between the traction apparatus and the skin. In traction, the affected limb may be immobilized for an extended period, making it vital for healthcare providers to regularly assess the skin for any signs of irritation, redness, or open areas. Maintaining skin integrity is paramount to prevent infection and promote healing in the fractured area. While temperature, mobility, and fluid intake are also important aspects of nursing care for clients with fractures, they do not have the same direct and immediate correlation with the risks presented by traction as skin integrity does.

**5. What factor is MOST likely to increase pain in a patient with low back pain?**

- A. Resting**
- B. Bending**
- C. Applying ice**
- D. Stretching exercises**

Bending is likely to increase pain in a patient with low back pain due to the biomechanical stress it places on the spine and associated structures. When bending forward, the lumbar discs are compressed, which can exacerbate existing conditions such as disc herniation or muscle strain, leading to increased pain. The position can also cause the surrounding muscles to engage in a protective spasm, further contributing to discomfort. In contrast, resting typically alleviates pain by reducing stress on the spinal structures, while applying ice can help decrease inflammation and numb the area, leading to pain relief. Stretching exercises, when done correctly, can improve flexibility and reduce muscle tension, which may also help in managing pain. Thus, bending is the most likely activity to increase pain in this context.

**6. After a client is diagnosed with a sprained ankle, which self-care measure shows an understanding of next steps?**

- A. "I should apply heat to the ankle to soothe it."**
- B. "I should elevate my foot above the level of the heart."**
- C. "I should walk on it to keep it flexible."**
- D. "I should avoid any weight-bearing activities."**

Elevating the foot above the level of the heart is an important self-care measure following an ankle sprain because it helps reduce swelling and promotes proper blood circulation. Elevation assists in minimizing the accumulation of fluids in the affected area and can alleviate pain. When combined with other initial treatment approaches, such as rest and ice application, elevation plays a crucial role in the overall management of a sprained ankle. In the context of the other options, applying heat is not appropriate for a fresh injury as it can increase inflammation and swelling. Walking on the sprained ankle is generally discouraged during the initial healing phase because it can exacerbate the injury and delay recovery. While avoiding weight-bearing activities can sometimes be necessary, doing so without proper context may not provide the balanced rest and rehabilitation needed to effectively manage the sprain.

**7. What indicates a complete understanding of measures to relieve itching under a cast?**

- A. "I should scratch the area outside of the cast."**
- B. "I can use a hair dryer on the low setting."**
- C. "I should apply lotion directly into the cast."**
- D. "I will remove the cast if it itches."**

Using a hair dryer on the low setting is a valid method to help relieve itching under a cast. This technique can provide a gentle stream of air that cools the skin and alleviates the sensation of itchiness without introducing any moisture or causing skin irritation, which can occur with other methods. The other choices suggest measures that could potentially worsen the situation. Scratching outside the cast may provide temporary relief but does not address the underlying cause of the itch and could lead to longer-term skin issues or tangling with the cast material. Applying lotion directly into the cast isn't advisable as it introduces moisture, which can lead to skin maceration or infection while also diminishing the integrity of the cast. Removing the cast due to itching is not a safe option unless directed by a healthcare provider, as it could impede the healing process and expose the skin to further complications.

**8. What is a common complication associated with osteoporosis that should be monitored?**

- A. Muscle cramps**
- B. Fractures**
- C. Joint swelling**
- D. Skin lesions**

Osteoporosis is a condition characterized by decreased bone density and strength, making bones more fragile and prone to fractures. A common complication associated with osteoporosis that requires careful monitoring is fractures, especially in areas such as the hip, spine, and wrist. These fractures can occur with minimal or no trauma, referred to as low-energy fractures, and can lead to significant morbidity and mortality, particularly in older adults. Monitoring for fractures is crucial because they can drastically alter a patient's quality of life, leading to pain, loss of function, and increased healthcare costs. Additionally, fractures, particularly hip fractures, are associated with higher rates of mortality in the elderly. Therefore, identifying and managing the risk factors for fractures in osteoporosis patients is essential. Other options, such as muscle cramps, joint swelling, and skin lesions, are not directly tied to osteoporosis or its primary complications, making fractures the most relevant concern in this context.

**9. Which statement would prompt the unit nurse to modify the home environment for a client discharged after spinal fusion?**

- A. My job requires me to stand for long periods.**
- B. My bedroom and bathroom are on the second floor of my home.**
- C. My family can help with daily tasks.**
- D. I have a walk-in shower at home.**

Modifying the home environment for a client after spinal fusion is vital for ensuring safety and promoting optimal recovery. When a client indicates that their bedroom and bathroom are located on the second floor, it raises significant concerns. After spinal fusion, individuals may experience limitations in mobility, difficulty with stair navigation, and an increased risk of falls. Consequently, having essential facilities on different levels of a home can hinder the client's ability to perform daily activities independently and safely. Being on the second floor also necessitates using stairs, which could be challenging post-surgery due to pain, muscle weakness, or instability. Therefore, this statement would prompt the nurse to take action to arrange for modifications, such as relocating essential items to the first floor or exploring alternative living arrangements temporarily to facilitate easier accessibility and enhance the client's safety during the recovery phase.

**10. What indicates a proper understanding of the care instructions for a new cast?**

- A. "I can remove the cast if it itches."**
- B. "I should keep the cast dry and clean."**
- C. "I may use a heating pad to ease discomfort."**
- D. "I should not move my fingers in the cast."**

The statement indicating a proper understanding of the care instructions for a new cast is the one that emphasizes the importance of keeping the cast dry and clean. This is crucial because moisture can compromise the integrity of the cast, potentially leading to skin irritation or infections. Keeping the cast clean also helps to prevent odors and deterioration of the material. This understanding is fundamental in ensuring the cast remains effective in immobilizing the affected area while also protecting the skin underneath. The other statements reflect misunderstandings of proper cast care. Removing the cast to relieve itching could lead to inadequate support for the healing injury. Using a heating pad may also create unwanted moisture or heat that could compromise the cast, and advising not to move fingers in the cast could hinder circulation and flexibility; while some restriction in movement may be necessary, passive range of motion exercises are often encouraged to maintain health in non-immobilized areas.

# 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

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

**<https://saundersmusculoskeletal.examzify.com>**

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

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