

# NIHSS Scoring

Scale Item	Coma	Difficult or Confused	Tips
<b>1a LOC Responsiveness</b>	2 - for some movement 3 - Flaccid or no movement	0 - if awake, alert	Can usually tell score by greeting
<b>1b LOC Questions</b>	2	1 - ET tube, trauma, severe dysarthria; 2 - Aphasia, stupor, confusion	Score initial response; pt may write answers.
<b>1c LOC Commands</b>	2	2 - if unable to understand or follow the commands	You are not testing grip strength. May pantomime if pt doesn't respond to command; ok if impaired by weakness
<b>2 Best Gaze</b>	0 if normal eye movement noted	0 if patient able to track your movements	Coma - hold eyes open and turn head side-to-side. Confused - Make eye contact and move to other side of bed
<b>3 Visual</b>	0 if blinks to visual threat 3 if no blink in any field 3 if blind due to any cause	0 if blinks to visual threat 3 if no blink in any field 3 if blind due to any cause	Three ways to test - finger counting, finger movement or threat; test in 4 quads of each eye separately
<b>4 Facial Palsy</b>	3	If patient is verbal, observe for facial droop. If confused and nonverbal, use noxious stimulation to elicit grimace	Check NLF in advance; score 1 for minor asymmetry on smiling; score 2 major for asymmetry of smile; score 3 for absence of movement in upper <b>and</b> lower face
<b>5a, 5b Motor arm</b>	3 for no effort against gravity 4 for no movement at all	If unable to follow directions, use observation to score. Is the patient using the arm?	<b>UN</b> testable only with amputation or fusion.
<b>6a, 6b Motor leg</b>	3 for no effort against gravity 4 for no movement at all	If unable to follow directions, use observation to score. Is the patient moving the leg?	<b>UN</b> testable only with amputation or fusion.
<b>7 Limb ataxia</b>	0	0 if unable to follow directions	Absent if paralyzed or unable to understand. <b>UN</b> testable only with amputation or fusion
<b>8 Sensory</b>	2	Use pinprick and observe patient's reactions if patient unable to cooperate	Ask pt, "can you feel this, can you feel this, and does it feel the same on each side"; (do not ask if sharper/duller)
<b>9 Best Language</b>	3	Choose score for stupor/limited cooperation: 2 - listener carries burden of communication; 3 - garbled or mute AND not following commands	Best language and COMPREHENSION; describe scene, name objects and read phrases. If blind, place object in hand and have patient describe
<b>10 Dysarthria</b>	2	1 - Difficult to understand (regardless of cause), 2 - speech not understandable, garbled	Listen to their words; if they can't read - have them repeat words or listen to the words they do say <b>UN</b> testable only with physical barrier
<b>11 Extinction and Inattention</b>	0	Score only if present	Looking for lack of awareness with double tactile/visual stimulation

**Reminders:**      a. Perform and score in numerical order.      b. Accept first response.      c. Do not coach.