

BACK SCRATCH TEST

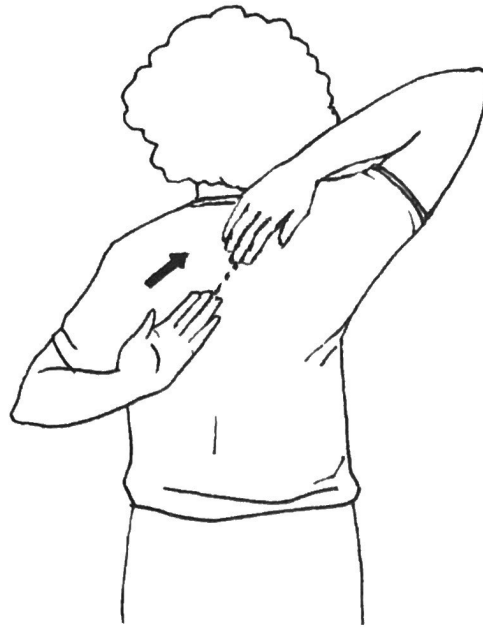


Figure 4.8

Purpose:

To assess upper-body (shoulder) flexibility

Equipment:

18-in. (45.72-cm) ruler

Procedure:

Have the participant stand and place his or her preferred hand over the same shoulder, palm down and fingers extended, reaching down the middle of the back as far as possible. See figure 4.8. Note that the elbow is pointed up. Ask the participant to place the other arm around the back of the waist with the palm up, reaching up the middle of the back as far as possible in an attempt to touch or overlap the extended middle fingers of both hands. The participant should practice the test to determine his or her preferred position (the hand over the shoulder that produces the best score)*. Two practice trials are given before scoring the test.

Check to see if the middle fingers are directed toward each other as best as possible. Without moving the participant's hands, direct the middle fingers to the best alignment. Do not allow participants to grab their fingers together and pull.

Scoring:

After giving the participant two warm-up practice trials in the preferred position, administer two test trials. Record both scores to the nearest half inch (cm), measuring the distance of overlap or distance between the tips of the middle fingers, then circle the better score. Give a minus (-) score if the middle fingers do not touch, a zero score if the middle fingers just barely touch, and a plus (+) score if the middle fingers overlap. Always measure the distance from the tip of one middle finger to the tip of the other, regardless of their alignment behind the back.

Safety Precautions:

Stop the test if the participant experiences pain. Remind participants to continue breathing as they stretch and to avoid any bouncing or rapid movements.

* Although it is important to work on flexibility for both sides of the body, for the sake of time only the preferred position was used in establishing norms.