

Massachusetts General Hospital

Functional Ambulation Classification

General Information:

- Categorizes patients according to basic motor skills necessary for functional ambulation
- Does not assess endurance

Instructions:

- Use the definitions below to classify the patient to a category
- Patients should be rated at their most independent level (supervision or physical assistance required to ambulate)
 - As an example, the patient is able to ambulate independently with a walker on level surfaces but requires can ambulate with crutches with supervision, the patient should receive the rating of "5" (ambulator— independent, level surfaces only).
- Only rate patients on the ability to ambulate.
- The ability to rise from sitting to standing should not be included

Definitions:

- Ambulation: Individual is able to walk at least 10 feet outside the parallel bars with supervision or physical assistance from only one person. Mechanical assistance from any device or ambulation aid (except parallel bars) may be used.
 - Level surface: Tile, rugs, pavement
 - Non-level surface: Grass, gravel, dirt, snow, ice
 - Stairs: Up and down at least seven steps with rail
 - Incline: Up and down 5-ft (1.52-m) incline of 30 degrees or greater
- Supervision: the patient is able to ambulate without manual contact from another person but requires stand-by guarding of one person for safety. This may be the result of poor judgment, questionable cardiac status, or verbal cues required to complete the task.
- Physical assistance level –I: manual contact is required from one person during ambulation to prevent falling. Manual contact may be continuous or intermittent light touch to assist balance or coordination.
- Physical assistance Level –II: manual contact of one person is required during ambulation to prevent falling. Manual contact may be continuous and necessary to support body weight and/or to maintain balance or assist coordination.

- Independent: ambulation is independent and without supervision or physical assistance from another person. The patient may utilize assistive devices (except parallel bars), orthoses, and prostheses.

Categories (Holden et al, 1994):

FAC Level	Ambulation Description	Definition
1	Nonfunctional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to ambulate • Ambulates only in parallel bars • Requires supervision or physical assistance from > 1 person
2	Dependent, Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires manual contact of one person during ambulation on level surfaces • Manual contact is continuous and necessary to support body weight and/or to maintain balance or assist coordination
3	Dependent, Level I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires manual contact of one person during ambulation on level surfaces • Manual contact is continuous or intermittent light touch to assist balance or coordination
4	Dependent, Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulation occurs on level surfaces without manual contact of another person • Requires stand-by guarding of one person because of poor judgment, questionable cardiac status, or the need for verbal cuing to complete the task
5	Independent, Level Surfaces Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulate is independent on level surfaces • Requires supervision/physical assistance to negotiate stairs, inclines, or unlevel surfaces.
6	Independent, Level and Non-Level Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulation is independent on unlevel and level surfaces, stairs, and inclines.

Reference: (Holden, Gill et al. 1984)

Holden, M. K., Gill K.M., et al. (1984). "Clinical gait assessment in the neurologically impaired. Reliability and meaningfulness." Phys Ther **64**(1): 35-40.