

# NIHSS “Cheat Sheet”

Scale	Category and Description
1a	Level of Consciousness <b>Introduce yourself and ask how patient is?</b>
1b	Level of Consciousness Questions <b>Ask patient what month it is and their age.</b> <i>Patient must be exactly right.</i>
1c	Level of Consciousness Commands <b>Ask patient to open/close eyes and then grip/release non-paretic hand.</b>
2	Best Gaze <b>Test visual gaze by moving finger horizontally in front of patient’s line of vision.</b>
3	Visual Field Testing <b>Have patient look at your nose, and wiggle fingers in 4 quadrants of peripheral vision (2 upper and 2 lower). If abnormal, perform with on each eye individually.</b> <i>If unable to track finger, use visual threat to test.</i>
4	Facial Paresis <b>Ask patient to show teeth/smile, squeeze eyes shut, and raise eyebrows.</b>
5a	Motor Function – Left Arm <b>Hold your left arm up (at 90 degree angle) for 10 seconds – eyes open.</b> <i>Count using verbal and visual cues.</i> <i>(If unable to hold arm up, can they move at the shoulder?)</i>
5b	Motor Function – Right Arm <b>Hold your right arm up (at 90 degree angle) for 10 seconds – eyes open.</b> <i>Count using verbal and visual cues.</i> <i>(If unable to hold arm up, can the move at the shoulder?)</i>
6a	Motor Function – Left Leg <b>Hold your left leg up (at 30 degree angle) for 5 seconds – eyes open.</b> <i>Count using verbal and visual cues.</i> <i>(If unable to hold leg up, can the move at the hip?)</i>
6b	Motor Function – Right Leg <b>Hold your right leg up (at 30 degree angle) for 5 seconds – eyes open.</b> <i>Count using verbal and visual cues.</i> <i>(If unable to hold leg up, can the move at the hip?)</i>
7	Limb Ataxia <b>*Holding your fingertip about arms length from patient, have pt touch his nose, then your finger 3 times on each arm.</b> <b>*Have patient put their heel on their shin and slide it straight down to the ankle level, then back to the knee.</b>
8	Sensory <b>Using a safety pin, gently prick patient on face with eyes open – does it feel the same.</b> <b>Repeat on inner forearms, then inner lower leg.</b>
9	Best Language <b>*Show patient dishwashing scene and ask them to tell you what is going on in the picture.</b> <b>*Show patient card with pictures and ask them to identify the objects. (If unable to list, ask them to point to each object)</b> <b>*Ask patient to read sentences on card.</b>
10	Dysarthria <b>Ask patient to repeat listed words on final cue cards (Ma-Ma,...).</b>
11	Extinction and Inattention (Neglect) <b>With eyes closed, touch patient on one side of face and have them tell you where they are being touched. Test each side then both at the same time.</b> <b>Repeat on inner forearms and lower legs.</b>