

NIHSS summary

The NIHSS (National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale), a clinical stroke assessment tool, quantifies stroke severity based on weighted findings by evaluating and documenting neurologic status in patients experiencing acute strokes. The following table summarizes the scale and provides a scoring example. For more detailed information, visit ninds.nih.gov/stroke-scales-and-related-information

NIHSS	Scale Definition	Initial NIHSS (Pre-thrombolytics)	Repeat NIHSS (Post-thrombolytics)
1a. Level of consciousness	0 = Alert, keenly responsive 1 = Not Alert but arousable by minor stimulation 2 = Not Alert, requires repeat stimulation 3 = Unresponsive or responds only with reflex	0 – Alert, keenly responsive	0 – Alert, keenly responsive
1b. Level of consciousness questions - What is the month? - What is your age?	0 = Both answers correct 1 = Answers one question correctly 2 = Answers neither question correctly	2 – Answers neither question correctly	0 – Answers both questions correctly
1c. Level of consciousness commands - Open and close your eyes. - Grip and release your hand.	0 = Performs both tasks correctly 1 = Performs 1 task correctly 2 = Performs neither task correctly	0 – Performs both tasks correctly	0 – Performs both tasks correctly
2. Best gaze	0 = Normal 1 = Partial gaze palsy 2 = Forced deviation	0 – Normal	0 – Normal
3. Visual	0 = No visual loss 1 = Partial hemianopia 2 = Complete hemianopia 3 = Bilateral hemianopia	0 – No visual loss	0 – No visual loss
4. Facial Palsy	0 = Normal symmetric movements 1 = Minor paralysis 2 = Partial paralysis 3 = Complete paralysis of 1 or both sides	0 – Normal symmetric movements	0 – Normal symmetric movements
5. Motor arm 5a. Left arm 5 b. Right arm	0 = No drift 1 = Drift 2 = Some effort against gravity 3 = No effort against gravity 4 = No movement	Left arm: 0 – No drift Right arm: 4 – No movement	Left arm: 0 – No drift Right arm: 2 – Some effort against gravity
6. Motor leg 6a. Left leg 6b. Right leg	0 = No drift 1 = Drift 2 = Some effort against gravity 3 = No effort against gravity 4 = No movement	Left leg: 0 – No drift Right leg: 4 – No movement	Left leg: 0 – No drift Right leg: 2 – Some effort against gravity
7. Limb ataxia	0 = Absent 1 = Present in 1 limb 2 = Present in 2 limbs	0 – Absent	0 – Absent
8. Sensory	0 = Normal; no sensory loss 1 = Mild-to-moderate sensory loss 2 = Severe-to-total sensory loss 3 = Severe-to-total sensory loss	0 – Normal, no sensory loss	0 – Normal, no sensory loss
9. Best Language	0 = No aphasia, normal 1 = Mild-to-moderate sensory loss 2 = Severe aphasia 3 = Mute, global aphasia	2 – Severe Aphasia	1 – Mild-to-moderate aphasia
10. Dysarthria	0 = Normal 1 = Mild-to-moderate dysarthria 2 = Severe dysarthria	2 – Severe dysarthria	0 – Normal
11. Extinction and inattention	0 = No abnormality 1 = Visual, tactile, auditory, spatial, or personal inattention 2 = Profound hemi-inattention or extinction	0 – No abnormality	0 – No abnormality
Score = 0–42		14	5