

Jebsen Hand Function Test

Adapted from Jebsen RH et al. An Objective and Standardized Test of Hand Function, Arch Phys Med Rehabil, 50 (6): 311-318, 1969; Methods. Used with permission from Elsevier Publishing.

The Jebsen Hand Function Test was designed to provide a short, objective test of hand function for activities of daily living. It has 7 items and takes approximately 15-45 minutes to administer.

7 items include: writing, turning over 3-by-5 inch cards, picking up small common objects, simulated feeding, stacking checkers, picking up large light objects and picking up large heavy objects. The results are measured by timing the time taken to accomplish each task. The tests are always presented in the same order and are performed with the non-dominant hand first.

For a video of the Jebsen Hand function test being performed by 2 lab students, click here:

Items 1-3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4Am5NVVcK8>

Items 4-7: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFWQXcnljgo&feature=relmfu>

Item 1: Writing

The examiner has a small index card with the blank side facing the subject propped up so the subject can easily read it. The index card has a sentence of third-grade reading difficulty, with 24 letters.

The subject is seated and given a pen and several sheets of white paper attached to a clipboard. The subject is instructed to begin copying the sentence from the index card onto the sheet when the examiner flips the index card and says “go”.

Record the time taken from “go” until the subject lifts their pen off the page after finishing the sentence.

Repeat with the dominant hand using a new sentence.

Verbal Instructions:

“Do you require glasses for reading? If so, put them on. Take this pen in your left hand and arrange everything so that it is comfortable for you to write with your left hand. On the other side of this card (indicate) is a sentence. When I turn the card over and say ‘Go’, write the sentence as quickly and as clearly as you can using your left hand. Write, do not print. Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “All right, now repeat the same thing, only this time using your right hand. I’ve given you a different sentence. Are you ready? Go.”

Item 2: Card Turning

Place 5 index cards (3x5 in) in a horizontal row 2 in apart on a desk in front of the subject. Each card should be placed 5 inches from the front edge of the desk (indicate this with tape).

Record the time from “go” until the subject turns the last card over. The cards do not have to be in the same placement after turning.

Repeat with the dominant hand.

Verbal Instructions:

“Place your left hand on the table please. When I say “go”. Use your left hand to turn these cards over one at a time as quickly as you can, beginning with this one (indicate card to extreme right). You may turn them over in any way that you wish and they need not be in a neat pattern when you finish. Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “Now the same thing with the right hand beginning with this one (indicate extreme left card). Ready? Go.”

Item 3: Small Common Objects

Place an empty 1-pound coffee can in front of the subject, 5 inches from the front edge of the desk. Next, place 2 United States pennies (closest to coffee can), 2 bottle caps with the inside facing up and 2 one-inch paper clips (farthest from coffee can) to the left, each of these items should be separated by 2 inches.

Record the time from “go” until the last item is placed inside the coffee can.

Repeat with the dominant hand – with the layout as a mirror image of the non-dominant setup.

Verbal instructions:

“Place your left hand on the table please. When I say “go”, use your left hand to pick up these objects one at a time and place them in the can as fast as you can beginning with this one (indicate paper clip on the extreme left). Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “Now the same thing with the right hand beginning here (indicate paper clip now on the extreme right). Ready? Go.”

Item 4: Simulated feeding

Place 5 kidney beans and an empty coffee can on a board clamped to the desk in front of the subject, 5 inches from the front edge of the desk. The beans should be oriented to the left of center, parallel to and touching the upright of the board 2 inches apart, the coffee can should be in the center. Give the subject a teaspoon. Record the time from the word “go” until the last bean hits the bottom of the coffee can.

Repeat with the dominant hand – placing the beans on the right side of the can if right hand, left side of the can if left hand.

Verbal instructions:

“Take the teaspoon in your left hand please. When I say “go”, use your left hand to pick up these beans one at a time with the teaspoon and place them in this can as fast as you can beginning with this one (indicate bean on the extreme left). Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “now the same thing with the right hand beginning here (indicate bean on extreme right). Ready? Go.”

Item 5: Checkers

Place 4 standard sized (1.25 inch diameter) wooden checkers in front of a board clamped to the desk in front of the subject, 5 inches from the front edge of the desk. The checkers should be placed 4 in a row, 2 on each side of the center. Record the time from the word “go” until the fourth checker makes contact with the third checker (subject is stacking the checkers one on top of another).

Repeat with the dominant hand.

Verbal instructions:

“Place your left hand on the table please. When I say “go”, use your left hand to stack these checkers on the board in front of you as fast as you can like this, one on top of the other (demonstrate). You may begin with any checker. Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “Now the same thing with the right hand. Ready? Go.”

Item 6: Large Light Object

Place 5 empty cans in front of a board clamped to the desk, 5 inches from the front edge of the desk, in front of the subject. Space the cans 2 inches apart with the open end of the can facing down. The subject is to place each can onto the board in front of the cans. Record the time from the word “go” until the subject releases the fifth can.

Repeat with the dominant hand.

Verbal instructions:

“Place your left hand on the table please. When I say ‘Go’, use your left hand to stand these cans on the board in front of you like this (demonstrate). Begin with this one (indicate can on extreme left). Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

Dominant hand – “Now the same thing with the right hand beginning here (indicate extreme right can). Ready? Go.”

Item 7: Large Heavy Objects

Place 5 full (1 pound) cans in front of a board clamped to the desk in front of the subject, 5 inches from the front edge of the desk. Space the cans 2 inches apart with the open end of the can facing down. The subject is to place each can onto the board in front of the cans. Record the time from the word “go” until the subject releases the fifth can.

Repeat with the dominant hand.

Verbal instructions:

“Now do the same thing with these heavier cans. Place your left hand on the table. When I say “Go”, use your left hand to stand these cans on the board as fast as you can. Begin here (indicate can on extreme left). Do you understand? Ready? Go.”

For the dominant hand – “Now the same thing with your right hand beginning here (indicate can on far right). Ready? Go.”

Jebsen Hand Function Test Worksheet:

Patient Name: _____ Date: _____

The tests are performed with the non-dominant hand first.

The results are measured by timing the time taken to accomplish each task.

Writing: _____ seconds

Card turning: _____ seconds

Small common object: _____ seconds

Simulated feeding: _____ seconds

Checkers: _____ seconds

Large light object: _____ seconds

Large heavy object: _____ seconds