

Electromyography (EMG) and Nerve Conduction Studies (NCS) October 06, 2021 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET

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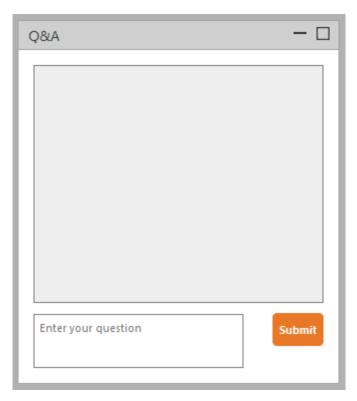
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Presenter



Robert Hall, M.D. Optum Corporate Medical Director



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Learning objectives

1.Explain the EMG/NCS examination and how it is performed.

2. Review the most common tests involved within an EMG/NCS.

3. Learn when an EMG/NCS should be obtained.

4. List conditions that can and cannot be diagnosed with an EMG/NCS.

5. Explain possible ways to determine if an injury is work-related using an EMG/NCS.

6. Describe fraud, waste, and abuse concerns around EMG/NCS and how to monitor.

7. Review sample EMG/NCS findings in common work-related injuries.



Common diagnostic tests*

V V

TEST	TYPE OF ENERGY	EXAMPLE OF USE
X-ray	Radiation	Fracture
СТ	Radiation	Tumor
MRI	Magnetic fields	Stroke
Ultrasound	Sound waves	Blood clot
EKG	Electrical signals (heart)	Heart attack
EEG	Electrical signals (brain)	Seizure
EMG/NCS	Electrical signals (nerves and muscles)	Carpal tunnel syndrome

*Not an all-inclusive list



An EMG...

Is needed for...

Test description...

Provides...

Limitations..

Performed..

Action potentials...

• Pain

- Numbness
- Paresthesias (tingling)
- Weakness
- +/- Muscle cramps



Is needed for...

Test description...

Provides...

Limitations..

Performed.

Action potentials...

- Two-part examination
 - Electromyogram (EMG)
 - Nerve conduction study (NCS)
- Both parts of the examination are usually referred to as
 - -EMG
 - -EMG/NCS
 - Electrodiagnostic (Edx) study
- Assesses the health and function of nerves
 and muscles



Is needed for...

Test description...

Provides information on...

Limitations..

Performed.

Action potentials..

- Has a significant nerve injury occurred?
 - Location
 Chronicity*
 - Severity
 Prognosis*
 - Evidence of healing Causation*
- Presence of non-occupational neurologic conditions
 - Prior nerve injury
 - Neuropathy from diabetes, thyroid disease, alcohol abuse, HIV, and kidney failure
 - -ALS, myopathy, and myasthenia gravis

*Characteristics may or may not be provided with the EMG and should not always be expected from the test.



Is needed for...

Test description...

Provides...

Limitations of test...

Performed.

Action potentials...

- Practitioner dependent
- Technical challenges
 - Skin temperature
 - Obesity
 - Swelling
 - Age-related changes
- Not all nerve-related conditions may be found with EMG testing
 - Nerve compression vs. nerve injury
 - Sampling error and sensitivity
 - Small fiber neuropathy



Is needed for...

Test description...

Provides...

Limitations.

Performed using...

Action potentials...

- Patient history
- Physical examination
- Equipment
 - Electrical stimulator
 - -Wire and needle electrodes
 - Amplifier
 - Computer with report generating software



Is needed for...

Test description...

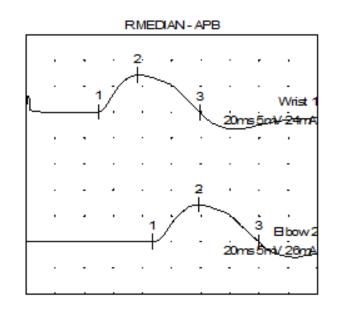
Provides...

Limitations.

Performed.

Action potentials...

- Action potential generation
- Traveling wave
- Snapshot in time (NCS)





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Is needed for...

Test description...

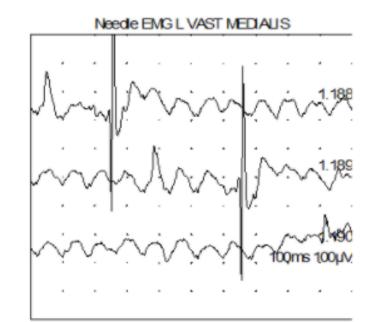
Provides...

Limitations..

Performed.

Action potentials...

- Action potential generation
- Traveling wave
- Snapshot in time (NCS)
- Real-time (EMG)





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Tests performed within an EMG

- Nerve conduction studies
 - Sensory
 - Motor
 - -F-wave
 - -H-reflex
 - Repetitive nerve stimulation
- EMG



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Tests performed within an EMG

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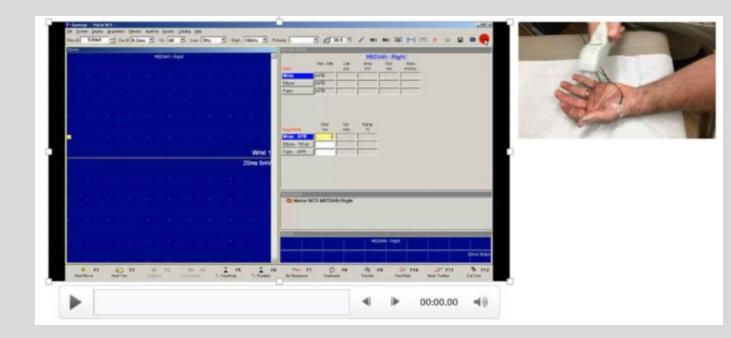
Video of: Nerve Conduction Study





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Video of: Nerve Conduction Study with screen output





Poll #1

- You must answer **all three poll questions** to qualify for CE credit.
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To submit your poll question answer:

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Example p	poll question?	
0	A. Option 1	
0	B. Option 2	
0	C. Option 3	OR
	Submit	
	0	O B. Option 2 O C. Option 3

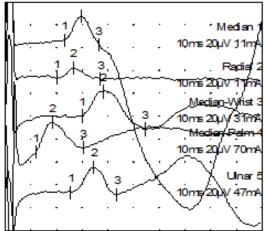
Send your answer in the Q&A panel





Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Peak Lat	NP Amp	Distance	Velocity
		ms	μV	cm	m/s
R HAND - Right Upper Limb					
Median	Dig I	3.0	20.9	10	43.5
Radial	Dig I	2.7	8.9	10	50.0
Median-Wrist	Dig 3	3.8	21.7	14	46.7
Median-Palm	Dig 3	1.9	26.5	6	50.0
Ulnar	Dig 5	3.5	21.8	14	54.9

R HAND- Right Upper Limb

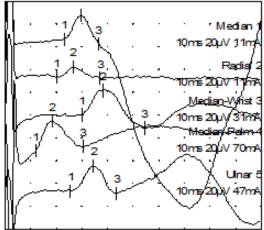




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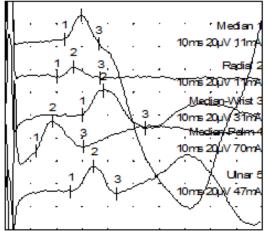




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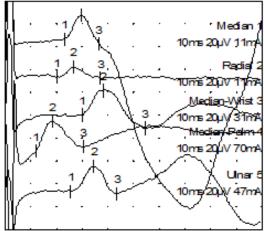




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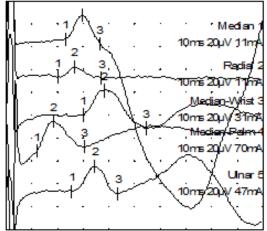




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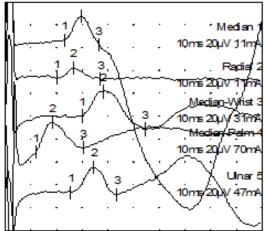




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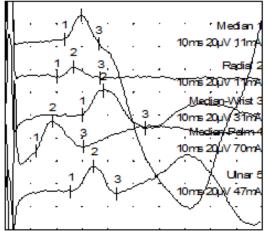




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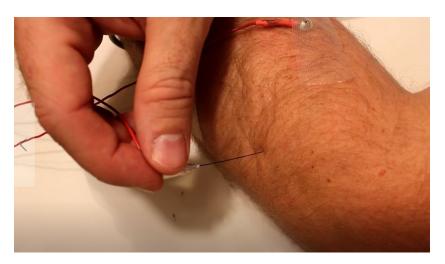
R HAND- Right Upper Limb

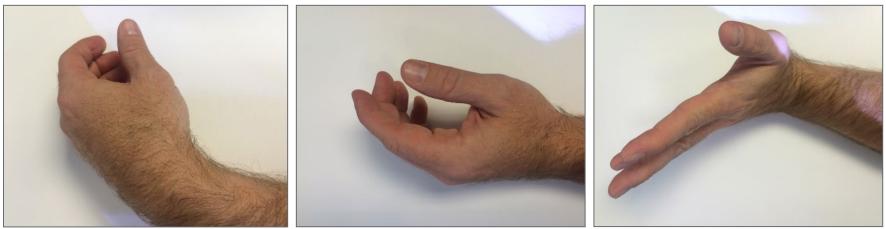




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EMG being performed







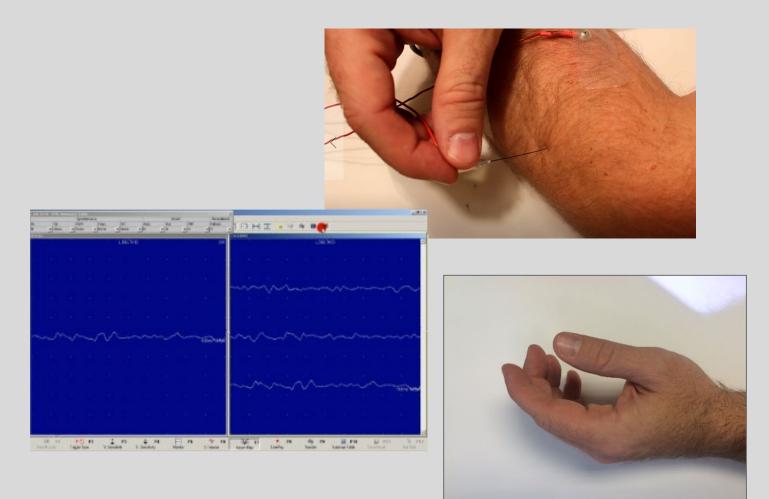
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Video of: EMG (normal findings)

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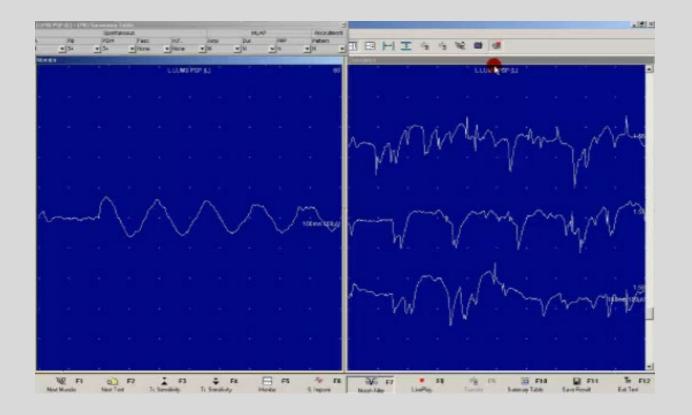


Video of: EMG (normal findings)



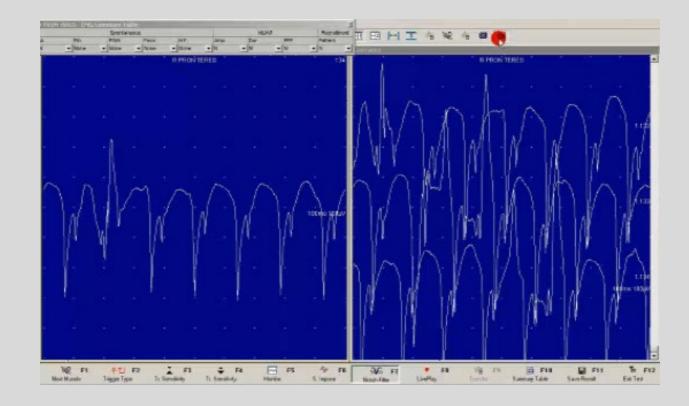


Video of: EMG (abnormal spinal muscles in lumbar radiculopathy)





Video of: EMG (abnormal arm muscle after c-spine surgery)





Sample EMG results - normal

EMG Summary Table									
	Spontaneous					MUAP			Recruitment
	IA	Fib	PSW	Fasc	H.F.	Amp	Dur.	PPP	Pattern
R. DELTOID	Ν	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
R. BICEPS	Ν	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
R. TRICEPS	Ν	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
R. PRON TERES	N	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
R. EXT DIG COMM	Ν	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
R. FIRST D INTEROS	Ν	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N



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R. PRON TERES	N	None	None	None	None	N	N	N	N
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R. EXT DIG COMM	N	None	None	None	None	Ν	N	N	N
R. FIRST D INTEROS	Ν	None	None	None	None	Ν	Ν	N	N



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R. EXT DIG COMM	Ν	None	None	None	None	Ν	N	N	Ν
R. FIRST D INTEROS	Ν	None	None	None	None	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν





- You must answer **all three poll questions** to qualify for CE credit.
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To submit your poll question answer:

Use the Submit button on your screen

Ð	xample p	poll question?	
C	C	A. Option 1	
C	C	B. Option 2	
C	C	C. Option 3	OR
		Submit	

Send your answer in the Q&A panel





An EMG...

Is it painful?

Are there risks?

What parts of the neuromuscular system can be tested?

- It is uncomfortable
- Depends on the patient's pain experience
 - -Needle phobia
 - -Electrophobia
- Pain medications can be taken before and after the EMG examination
- Sedation is not usually provided



An EMG...

Is it painful?

Are there risks?

What parts of the neuromuscular system can be tested?

Focal discomfort

- Occasional lightheadedness and/or nausea
- Local and very minimal bleeding
- Pacemakers are usually not an issue
- Higher risk EMG examinations are uncommon in workers' compensation
 - Thoracic radiculopathy
 - Phrenic nerve paralysis



An EMG...

Is it painful?

Are there risks?

What parts of the neuromuscular system can be tested?

- Sensory nerve fibers (NCS)
- Motor nerve fibers (NCS)
- Muscle fibers (EMG)
- Motor unit
 - -Anterior horn cell (ALS)
 - Nerve root (radiculopathy)
 - Plexus (plexopathy)
 - Peripheral nerve (carpal tunnel)
 - Neuromuscular junction (botulism)
 - Muscle fibers (myopathy)



Conditions that CAN be diagnosed with an EMG

ANTERIOR HORN CELL DISEASE

ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease)

NERVE ROOT INJURY

- Cervical radiculopathy
- Lumbosacral radiculopathy

PLEXOPATHY

- Brachial
- Lumbosacral

MONONEUROPATHY

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Ulnar neuropathy
- Sciatic neuropathy

POLYNEUROPATHY

Guillain-Barre syndrome

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

- Metabolic (diabetes, thyroid disease)
- Chemical exposure (alcohol, solvents)
- Medication-related (chemotherapy)

NEUROMUSCULAR JUNCTION DISORDER

- Myasthenia gravis
- Botulism

MYOPATHY

Inflammatory



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Conditions that CANNOT be diagnosed with an EMG

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Stroke
- Spinal cord injury
- Multiple sclerosis

MUSCULOSKELATAL SYSTEM

- Bone, ligament, tendon injuries
- Rotator cuff tears
- Meniscus injuries
- Muscle strains
- Plantar fasciitis

FIBROMYALGIA

SMALL FIBER PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME (CRPS)



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EMG timing



When should an EMG be completed?

- Immediately
- Severe injuries
- Amount of information obtained will be limited
- Complete vs. incomplete nerve injury
- Three weeks after injury



EMG timing

3 wks

When should an EMG be completed?

- Immediately
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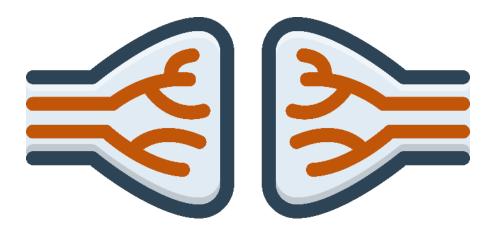


When should an EMG be repeated?

- Depends on the severity of symptoms and potential of a treatable cause
- When no abnormalities were initially found but symptoms persist or worsen
- If symptoms continue even after treatment (such as carpal tunnel release)



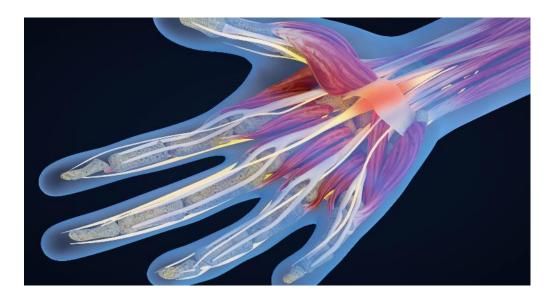
How do EMG results change over time?



- •Nerve injuries may heal over time but healing may be slow and incomplete
- Although symptoms may improve, nerve conduction studies do not always go back to normal even after healing
- Reinnervation changes seen in the EMG study can give a clue as to when the injury occurred



Why would an EMG be normal in patients who have symptoms?



- Nerve compression without nerve injury (e.g., Carpal tunnel syndrome)
- EMG is performed before there has been enough time for abnormalities to show up
- Symptoms are not related to a nerve problem



Conditions that can mimic nerve injury

- Rotator cuff injury
- Labral injury
- Tendinitis
- Arthritis
 - Hand
 - Wrist
 - Hip
 - Spine
- Degenerative disc disease
- Muscle strain
- Fibromyalgia



The EMG report

- Nerves and muscles that are abnormal
- Specific location of nerve injury
- Extent of nerve injury
 - -Mild, moderate, severe
 - -Complete
 - -Incomplete
- Acute or chronic
 - -Reinnervation changes
- Prognosis





Using the EMG results





GUIDE AND DIRECT ONGOING TREATMENT	BASELINE FOR FUTURE COMPARISON	MORE INFORMATION
MedicationsBraces	If recovery is delayed or incomplete	Prognosis for recovery
 Physical and occupational therapy 		
 Surgical considerations 		



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Determining if EMG abnormalities are work-related

- Is there evidence of acute or chronic nerve injury?
- Do the EMG abnormalities relate to the
 - Site of injury
 - Time of the injury
 - Mechanism of the injury





ODG recommendations for EMG/NCS





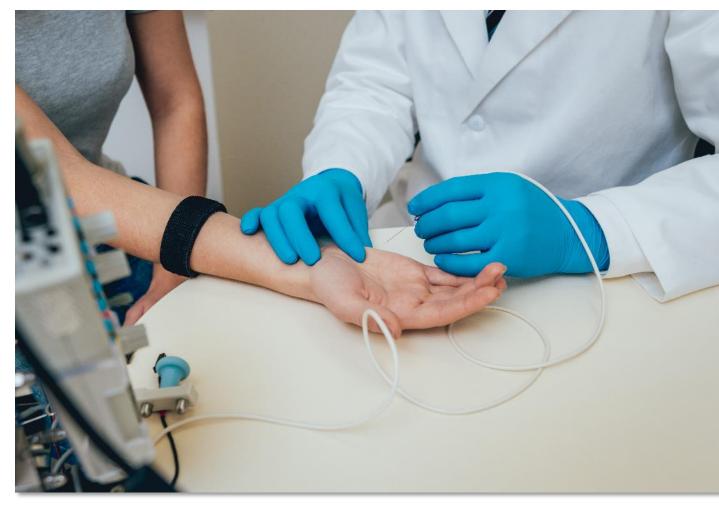
GENERALLY RECOMMENDED	CONDITIONALLY RECOMMENDED			
Neck and upper back conditions	Low back conditions			
Atypical cases	Following four weeks of conservative therapy			
 Needle EMG, not surface EMG 	 Patient selection and predicting success with 			
 More than one underlying condition 	epidural steroid injections			
	 Not recommended for well-established chronic radiculopathy, UNLESS 			
	 Recent symptom worsening 			
Resource: ODG	 Deterioration of neurologic findings 			



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EMG providers

- Approved medical specialties with advanced neuromuscular training
 - Neurology
 - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R)
- Avoid noncertified or limited experience providers





Questionable billing practices in EMG testing

- Office of Inspector General (OIG) 2014 report on questionable billing
- Physicians with unusually high percentages or averages of the following:
 - -Modifer 59 (distinct services not bundled)
 - -Modifer 25 (evaluation and management on the same day as procedure)
 - -High percentage of EMG claims
 - -High percentage of claims that do not include both nerve conduction and needle EMG
 - -High number of miles between provider and patients
 - -High percentage of patients with three or more providers performing EMG testing
 - -High number of EMG claims on the same day for the same patient



Fraud, waste and abuse related to EMG

- Isolated cases of over utilization
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) fee schedule changes
- Auditing





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	OR
Submit	
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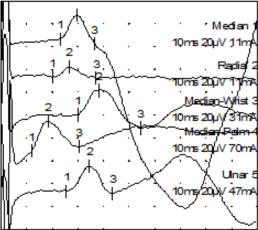


Sample cases

Normal sensory nerve conduction studies of the hand and wrist

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Peak Lat	NP Amp	Distance	Velocity
		ms	μV	cm	m/s
R HAND - Right Upper Limb					
Median	Dig I	3.0	20.9	10	43.5
Radial	Dig I	2.7	8.9	10	50.0
Median-Wrist	Dig 3	3.8	21.7	14	46.7
Median-Palm	Dig 3	1.9	26.5	6	50.0
Ulnar	Dig 5	3.5	21.8	14	54.9

R HAND- Right Upper Limb



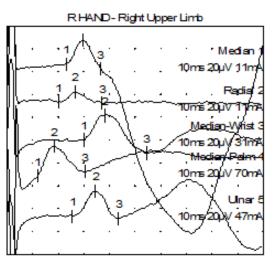


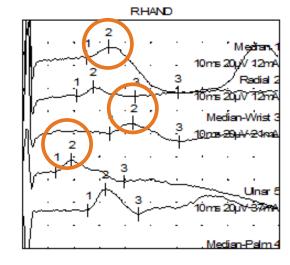
DTIIM

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Mild carpal tunnel syndrome

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Peak Lat ms	NP Amp μV	Distance	Velocity m/s
R HAND		mə	μν	cm	nu s
Median	Dig I	3.4	9.6	10	40.0
Radial	Dig I	2.8	8.0	10	47.6
Median-Wrist	Dig 3	4.3	9.8	14	41.2
Median-Palm	Dig 3	1.9	10.8	5.5	42.3
Ulnar	Dig 5	3.2	18.4	14	54.9





What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?



PTUM

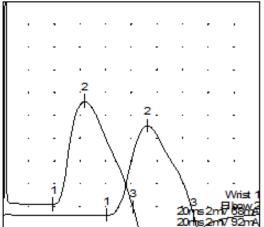
Abnormal- Mild

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Normal motor NCS

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
R MEDIAN - APB						
Wrist	APB	3.9	9.0	Wrist - APB	8	
Elbow	APB	8.1	7.9	Elbow - Wrist	21.5	51.8

RMEDIAN-APB

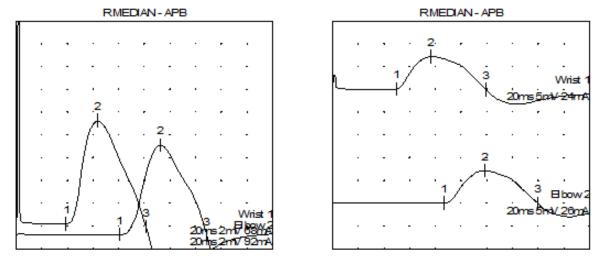


Normal



Moderate carpal tunnel syndrome

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
R MEDIAN - APB						
Wrist	APB	5.0	7.1	Wrist - APB	8	
Elbow	APB	8.7	7.2	Elbow - Wrist	20	54.1



What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?

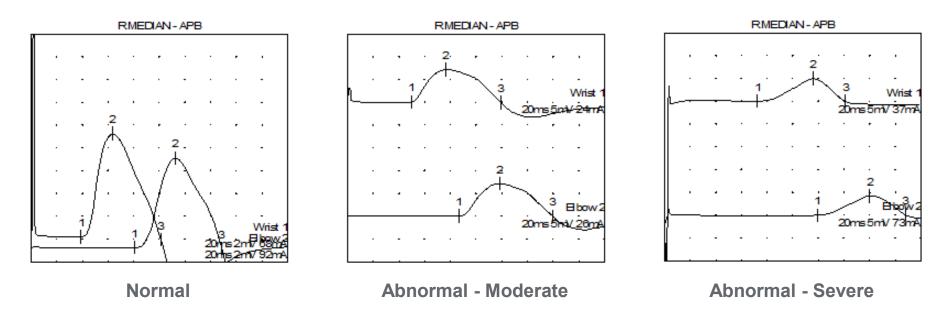
Normal

Abnormal - Moderate



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Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
R MEDIAN - APB						
Wrist	APB	7.3	5.0	Wrist - APB	8	
Elbow	APB	11.9	4.2	Elbow - Wrist	20.5	44.1



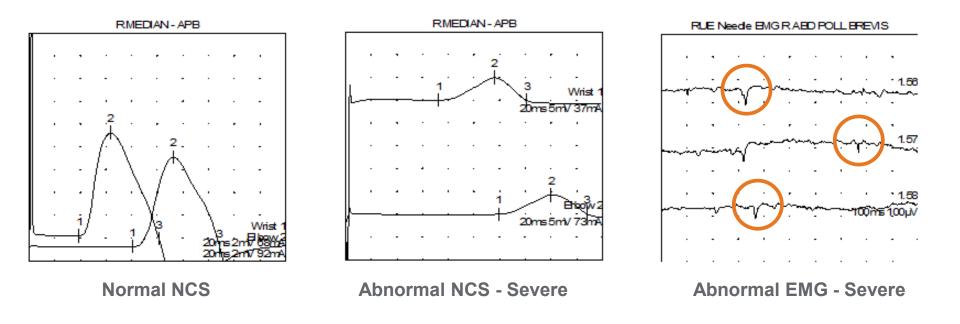


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Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
R MEDIAN - APB						
Wrist	APB	7.3	5.0	Wrist - APB	8	
Elbow	APB	11.9	4.2	Elbow - Wrist	20.5	44.1

What do the test results show you?

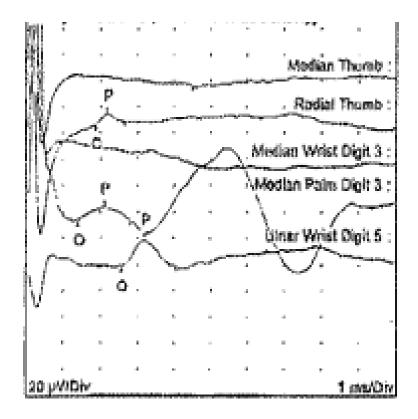
How can you use this information?





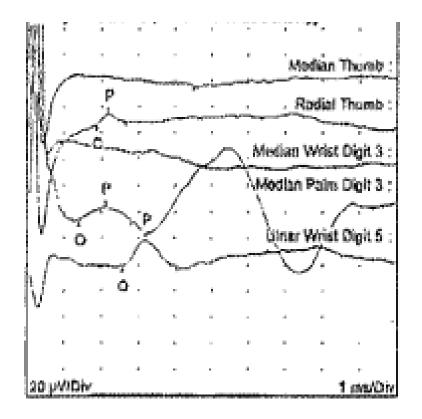
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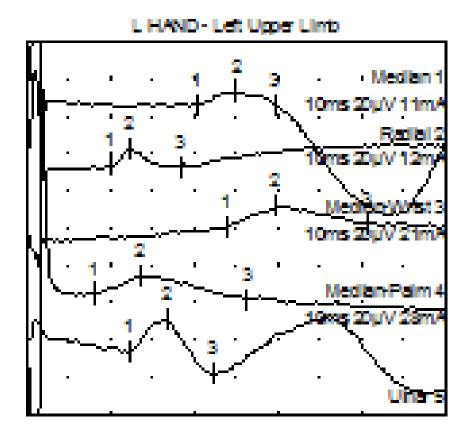


Before surgery





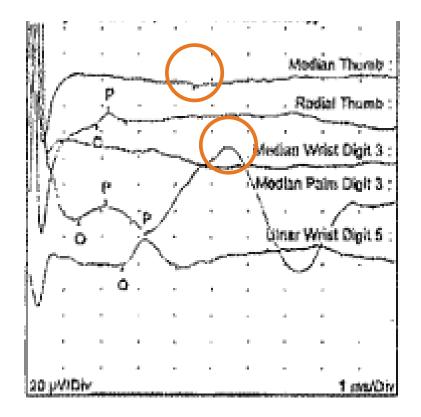
Before surgery



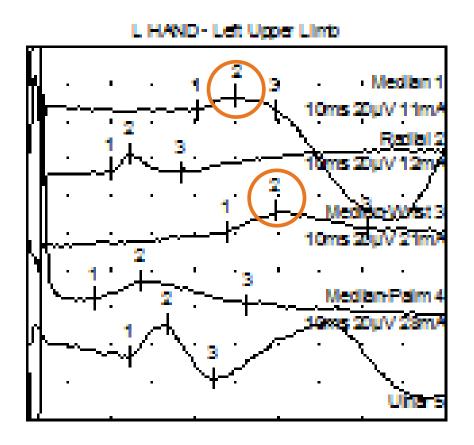
After surgery



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Before surgery



After surgery

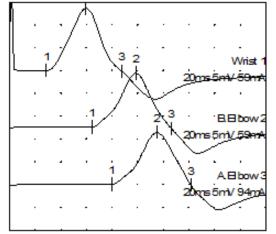


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Normal ulnar motor NCS

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
L ULNAR - ADM						
Wrist	ADM	2.9	13.7	Wrist - ADM	8	
B.Elbow	ADM	6.5	11.9	B.Elbow - Wrist	18	50.0
A.Elbow	ADM	8.0	11.3	A.Elbow - B.Elbow	11.5	76.7

LULNAR-ADM



Normal

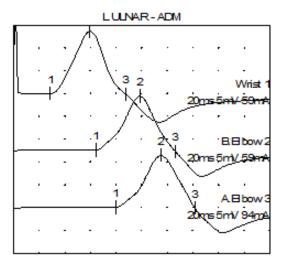


Ulnar neuropathy at the elbow

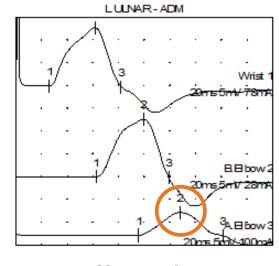
Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp mV	Segments	Dist cm	Velocity m/s
L ULNAR - ADM						
Wrist	ADM	2.6	12.8	Wrist - ADM	8	
B.Elbow	ADM	6.3	12.6	B.Elbow - Wrist	19.5	53.4
A.Elbow	ADM	9.6	5.1	A.Elbow - B.Elbow	11	33.3

What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?



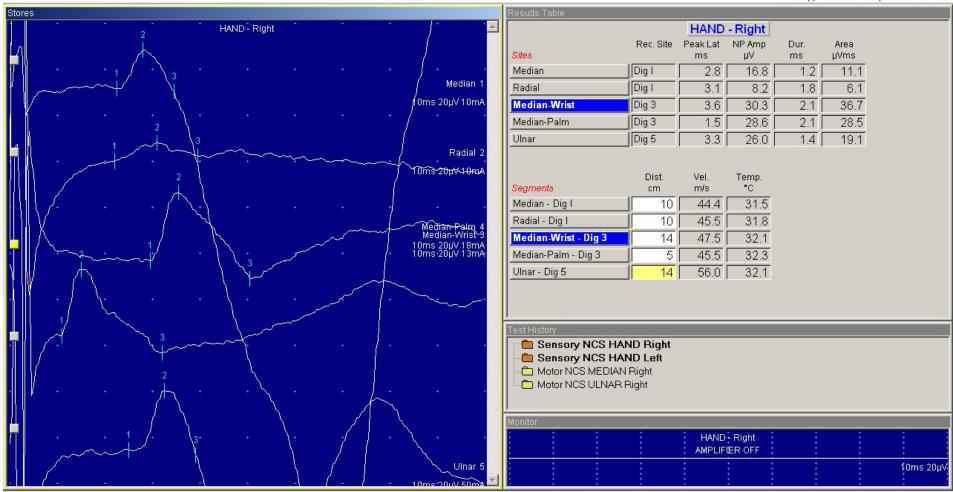
Normal



Abnormal



Workers' comp crush injury to hand and wrist with numbness and pain

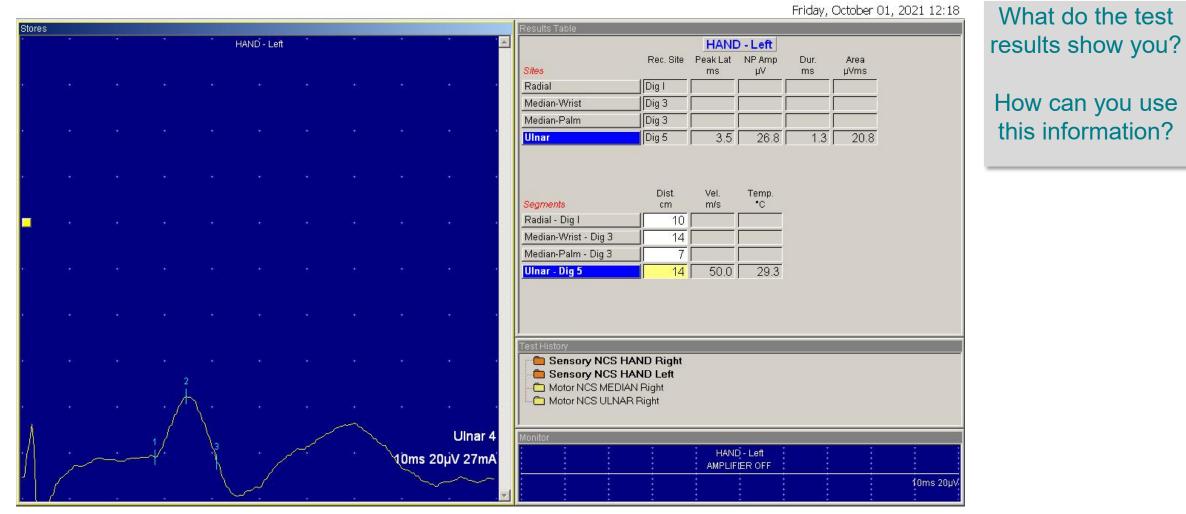


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Workers' comp crush injury to hand and wrist with numbness and pain



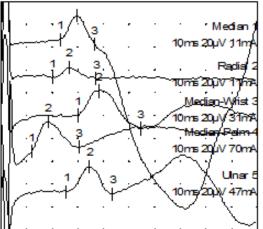


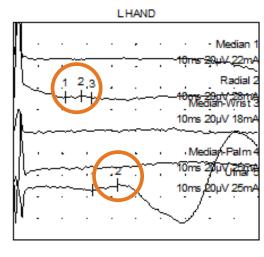
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Peripheral neuropathy and carpal tunnel syndrome

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Peak Lat ms	NP Amp μV	Distance cm	Velocity m/s
L HAND					
Median	Dig I	NR	NR	10	NR
Radial	Dig I	2.8	0.92	10	47.6
Median-Wrist	Dig 3	NR	NR	14	NR
Median-Palm	Dig 3	NR	NR	7	NR
Ulnar	Dig 5	4.3	4.7	14	43.1

R HAND- Right Upper Limb





Normal

Abnormal



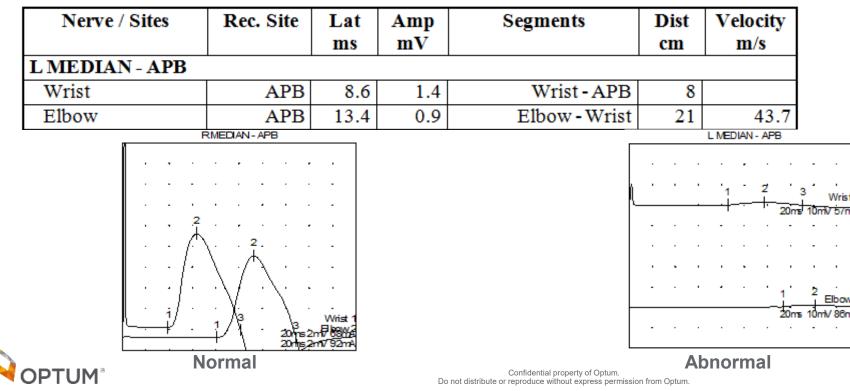
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Peripheral neuropathy and carpal tunnel syndrome

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat ms	Amp Segments mV		Dist cm	Velocity m/s
R MEDIAN - APB						
Wrist	APB	3.9	9.0	Wrist - APB	8	
Elbow	APB	8.1	7.9	Elbow - Wrist	21.5	51.8

What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?



Chronic low back and right leg pain

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat	Amp	Segments	Dist	Velocity
		ms	mV		cm	m/s
R COMM PERONEAL - EDB						
Ankle	EDB	5.4	3.0	Ankle - EDB	8	
Fib Head	EDB	12.5	2.3	Fib Head - Ankle	28.5	40.1
Knee	EDB	15.2	2.3	Knee - Fib Head	15	55.6
R TIBIAL (KNEE) - AH						
Ankle	AH	4.1	9.3	Ankle - AH	8	
Knee	AH	13.2	6.3	Knee - Ankle	38	42.0

R COMM PERONEAL - EDB RTIBIAL (KINEE) - AH Ankle Ankle 50ms2ml/79mA 50ms 5mV 40m/ Fib Head 2 50ms 2mV 100mA . . Knee Knee 50ms2m/71mA 50ms 5mV 94mA Normal **Abnormal**



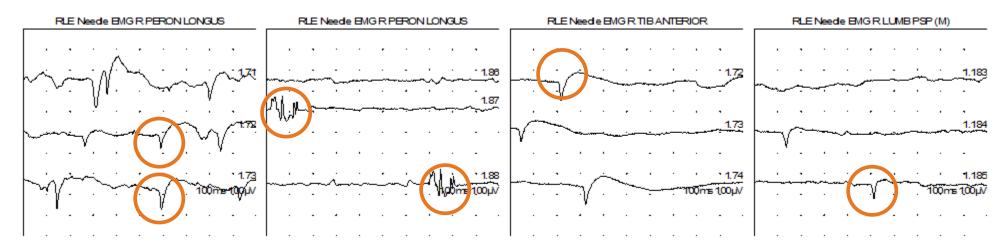
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Chronic low back and right leg pain

EMG Summary Table									
	Spontaneous					MUAP			Recruitment
	IA	Fib	PSW	Fasc	H.F.	Amp	Dur.	PPP	Pattern
R. VAST MEDIALIS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
R. GRACILIS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. TIB ANTERIOR	N	None	1+	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Reduced
R. PERON LONGUS	N	2+	2+	None	None	N	1+	2+	Reduced
R. GASTROCN (MED)	N	None	None	None	None	N	N	Ν	N
R. FIRST D INTEROS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. LUMB PSP	N	None	1+	None	None				

What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?





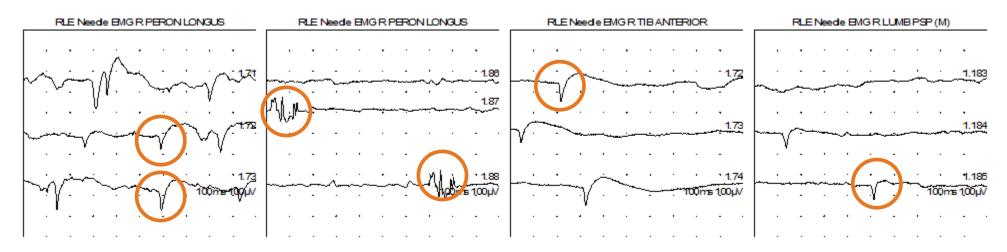
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Chronic low back and right leg pain - Right L5 radiculopathy

EMG Summary Table									
	Spontaneous					MUAP			Recruitment
	IA	Fib	PSW	Fasc	H.F.	Amp	Dur.	PPP	Pattern
R. VAST MEDIALIS	N	None	None	None	None	Ν	Ν	Ν	N
R. GRACILIS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. TIB ANTERIOR	N	None	1+	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Reduced
R. PERON LONGUS	N	2+	2+	None	None	N	1+	2+	Reduced
R. GASTROCN (MED)	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. FIRST D INTEROS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
R. LUMB PSP	N	None	1+	None	None				

What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?

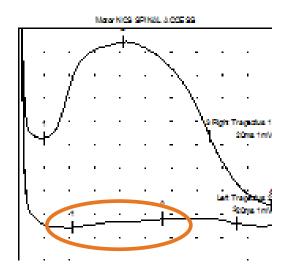




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Winged scapula and shoulder pain

Nerve / Sites	Lat ms	Amp mV	Amp %
SPINAL ACCESS			
Right Trapezius	2.05	4.2	100
Left Trapezius	4.20	0.4	8.86



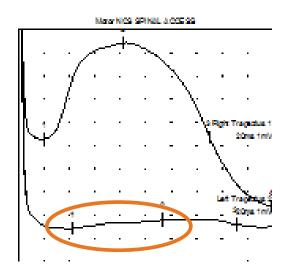


Winged scapula and shoulder pain – Severe spinal accessory neuropathy

Nerve / Sites	Lat ms	Amp mV	Amp %
SPINAL ACCESS			
Right Trapezius	2.05	4.2	100
Left Trapezius	4.20	0.4	8.86

What do the test results show you?

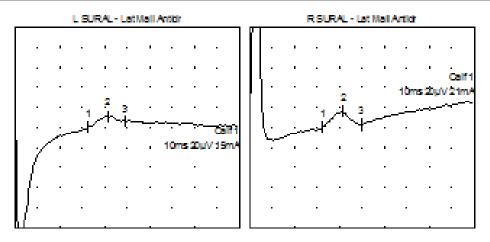
How can you use this information?



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Muscle cramps and weakness

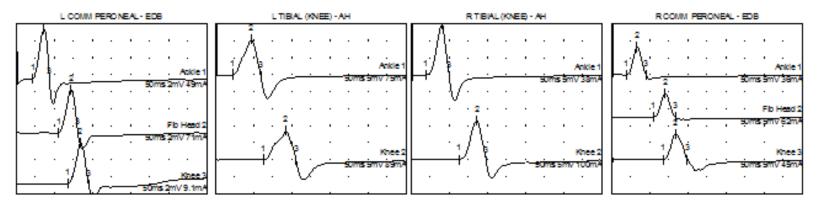
Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Peak Lat ms	NP Amp μV	Distance cm	Velocity m/s						
L SURAL - Lat Mall Antidr											
Calf	Lat Mall	4.1	11.3	14	43.1						
R SURAL - Lat Mall Antidr											
Calf	Lat Mall	4.2	16.1	14	43.1						





Muscle cramps and weakness

Nerve / Sites	Rec. Site	Lat	Amp	Segments	Dist	Velocity
		ms	mV		cm	m/s
L COMM PERONEAL - EDB						
Ankle	EDB	4.3	5.8	Ankle - EDB	8	
Fib Head	EDB	11.1	5.1	Fib Head - Ankle	32.5	47.8
Knee	EDB	13.6	4.8	Knee - Fib Head	12	48.0
L TIBIAL (KNEE) - AH						
Ankle	AH	4.5	10.4	Ankle - AH	8	
Knee	AH	12.7	8.4	Knee - Ankle	36	44.2
R COMM PERONEAL - EDB						
Ankle	EDB	3.9	8.2	Ankle - EDB	8	
Fib Head	EDB	10.9	7.1	Fib Head - Ankle	32.5	46.1
Knee	EDB	13.4	7.5	Knee - Fib Head	12	48.0
R TIBIAL (KNEE) - AH						
Ankle	AH	4.0	14.7	Ankle - AH	8	
Knee	AH	12.5	11.4	Knee - Ankle	39	45.9





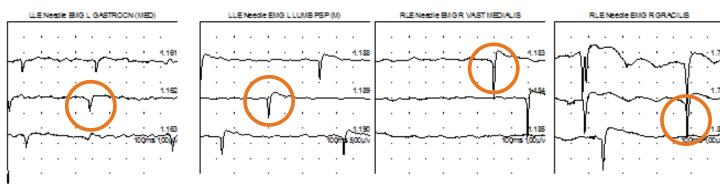
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Muscle cramps and weakness

EMG Summary Table									
	Spontaneous					MUAP			Recruitment
	IA	Fib	PSW	Fasc	H.F.	Amp	Dur.	PPP	Pattern
R. VAST MEDIALIS	N	None	1+	None	None	N	N	Ν	Ν
R. GRACILIS	N	None	2+	1+	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. TIB ANTERIOR	N	None	None	1+	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
R. PERON LONGUS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. GASTROCN (MED)	N	None	1+	1+	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
R. FIRST D INTEROS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
R. LUMB PSP	N	None	3+	None	None				
L. VAST MEDIALIS	N	None	1+	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
L. GRACILIS	Ν	None	1+	None	None	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν
L. TIB ANTERIOR	N	None	1+	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
L. PERON LONGUS	N	None	1+	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
L. GASTROCN (MED)	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	Ν
L. FIRST D INTEROSS	N	None	None	None	None	N	Ν	Ν	N
L. LUMB PSP	N	None	1+	None	None				

What do the test results show you?

How can you use this information?





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Nonsurgical recommendations that can make a significant impact

- Posture
- Decrease repetitive motion
- Rest breaks and stretching
- Ergonomics
- Weight loss



Summary

- EMG and NCS are useful in determining if a significant nerve injury has occurred
- Some abnormal findings on EMG can be present immediately following nerve injury but the extent of the injury may not be observed until 3 to 4 weeks later
- EMG and NCS are most useful in determining the cause(s) of pain, numbness, tingling and weakness
- EMG and NCS should be performed by experienced providers
- Follow-up EMG and NCS studies for the same patient are not usually necessary but may be indicated on a case-by-case basis



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