

## Pain Assessment Tool Guidelines for use: Numeric Pain Scale

No Pain	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Pain
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### Instructions for use:

The numerical rating scale (NRS) is perhaps the most common pain assessment tool used. It is important to recognize this is an 11-point scale (0-10 not 1-10). Ask the patient whether or not they are experiencing discomfort right now. If so, ask them to describe the discomfort.

- To ascertain their understanding of the scale, ask if they would recognize:
  - a state of no pain (“0”) (or specific discomfort they describe)
  - and the worst pain (or specific discomfort) imaginable (“10”).
- Have the patient rate the intensity of their pain/discomfort “right now” verbally with a number or by pointing to the number that represents their pain intensity
- This process can be repeated with similar questions about emotional distress

### Scoring instructions:

Record the corresponding numerical value based on the patient’s response.

### Populations for use:

The NRS is a widely used tool that is appropriate for adults, and may be used in the mildly cognitively impaired adult. Patients report lower pain scores when they are educated about the proper use of this scale.

### Validity and reliability:

The validity of the NRS has been well established and it has been shown to be easy to use.

### References:

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