

Modified postural stability assessment Balance error scoring system (BESS)




(Balance Error Scoring System (BESS)) (Developed by the University of North Carolina – adapted from descriptors in Gruskiewicz (2001)³³)

Administration

All tests are performed for 20 second trials. The score is calculated by adding one (1) point for each error. For example, an error in the left single leg stance position (eyes closed), the patient opens their eyes after 4 seconds and then steps or stumbles after 6 seconds, resumes the test posture left single leg stance eyes closed in 3 seconds (only error if < 5 seconds delay) – the score is one point for each error = 2. The patient is asked to resume the testing posture as quickly as possible.

A higher score equates to a worse performance. Best performance = 0. The total score is the sum of all the errors. The score is compared for each individual over time. There is no normative data.

* All eight test positions are recommended. However, a simple less sensitive balance screen involves three items of the BESS, which may be selected if time is limited. The items include double leg (eyes closed), single leg (non-dominant foot), heel-toe/ tandem stance with non-dominant foot at the rear.

	 A (feet narrowly together, hands on hips)		 B				 C (non-dominant foot to the rear)	
TYPES of ERRORS	Double leg eyes open (A)	*Double leg eyes closed (A)	*Left leg eyes open (B)	Left leg eyes closed (B)	Right leg eyes open (B)	Right leg eyes closed (B)	*Tandem stance eyes open (C)	Tandem Stance eyes closed (C)
Lifting hands off the iliac crest								
Opening the eyes (when inappropriate)								
Stepping, stumbling, or falling								
Moving the hip more than 30 deg. of flexion or abduction								
Lifting the forefoot or heel								
Remaining out of the testing position > 5 seconds								
TOTAL								