Barthel Index of Activities of Daily Living

Instructions: Choose the scoring point for the statement that most closely corresponds to the patient's current level of ability for each of the following 10 items. Record actual, not potential, functioning. Information can be obtained from the patient's self-report, from a separate party who is familiar with the patient's abilities (such as a relative), or from observation. Refer to the Guidelines section on the following page for detailed information on scoring and interpretation.

The Barthel Index

Bowels
0 = incontinent (or needs to be given enemata)
1 = occasional accident (once/week)
2 = continent
Patient's Score: ___

Bladder
0 = incontinent, or catheterized and unable to manage
1 = occasional accident (max. once per 24 hours)
2 = continent (for over 7 days)
Patient's Score: ___

Grooming
0 = needs help with personal care
1 = independent face/hair/teeth/shaving (implements provided)
Patient's Score: ___

Toilet use
0 = dependent
1 = needs some help, but can do something alone
2 = independent (on and off, dressing, wiping)
Patient's Score: ___

Feeding
0 = unable
1 = needs help cutting, spreading butter, etc.
2 = independent (food provided within reach)
Patient's Score: ___

Transfer
0 = unable – no sitting balance
1 = major help (one or two people, physical), can sit
2 = minor help (verbal or physical)
3 = independent
Patient's Score: ___

Mobility
0 = immobile
1 = wheelchair independent, including corners, etc.
2 = walks with help of one person (verbal or physical)
3 = independent (but may use any aid, e.g., stick)
Patient's Score: ___

Dressing
0 = dependent
1 = needs help, but can do about half unaided
2 = independent (including buttons, zips, laces, etc.)
Patient's Score: ___

Stairs
0 = unable
1 = needs help (verbal, physical, carrying aid)
2 = independent up and down
Patient's Score: ___

Bathing
0 = dependent
1 = independent (or in shower)
Patient's Score: ___

Total Score: _____

(Collin et al., 1988)

Scoring:

Sum the patient's scores for each item. Total possible scores range from 0 – 20, with lower scores indicating increased disability. If used to measure improvement after rehabilitation, changes of more than two points in the total score reflect a probable genuine change, and change on one item from fully dependent to independent is also likely to be reliable.

Sources:

- Collin C, Wade DT, Davies S, Horne V. The Barthel ADL Index: a reliability study. *Int Disabil Stud*. 1988;10(2):61-63.
- Mahoney FI, Barthel DW. Functional evaluation: the Barthel Index. *Md State Med J*. 1965;14:61-65.
- Wade DT, Collin C. The Barthel ADL Index: a standard measure of physical disability? *Int Disabil Stud*. 1988;10(2):64-67.

Guidelines for the Barthel Index of Activities of Daily Living

General

- The Index should be used as a record of what a patient ***does***, NOT as a record of what a patient ***could do***.
- The main aim is to establish degree of independence from any help, physical or verbal, however minor and for whatever reason.
- The need for supervision renders the patient not independent.
- A patient's performance should be established using the best available evidence. Asking the patient, friends/relatives, and nurses will be the usual source, but direct observation and common sense are also important. However, direct testing is not needed.
- Usually the performance over the preceding 24 – 48 hours is important, but occasionally longer periods will be relevant.
- Unconscious patients should score '0' throughout, even if not yet incontinent.
- Middle categories imply that the patient supplies over 50% of the effort.
- Use of aids to be independent is allowed.

Bowels (preceding week)

- If needs enema from nurse, then 'incontinent.'
- 'Occasional' = once a week.

Bladder (preceding week)

- 'Occasional' = less than once a day.
- A catheterized patient who can completely manage the catheter alone is registered as 'continent.'

Grooming (preceding 24 – 48 hours)

- Refers to personal hygiene: doing teeth, fitting false teeth, doing hair, shaving, washing face. Implements can be provided by helper.

Toilet use

- Should be able to reach toilet/commode, undress sufficiently, clean self, dress, and leave.
- 'With help' = can wipe self and do some other of above.

Feeding

- Able to eat any normal food (not only soft food). Food cooked and served by others, but not cut up.
- 'Help' = food cut up, patient feeds self.

Transfer

- From bed to chair and back.
- 'Dependent' = NO sitting balance (unable to sit); two people to lift.
- 'Major help' = one strong/skilled, or two normal people. Can sit up.
- 'Minor help' = one person easily, OR needs any supervision for safety.

Mobility

- Refers to mobility about house or ward, indoors. May use aid. If in wheelchair, must negotiate corners/doors unaided.
- 'Help' = by one untrained person, including supervision/moral support.

Dressing

- Should be able to select and put on all clothes, which may be adapted.
- 'Half' = help with buttons, zips, etc. (*check!*), but can put on some garments alone.

Stairs

- Must carry any walking aid used to be independent.

Bathing

- Usually the most difficult activity.
- Must get in and out unsupervised, and wash self.
- Independent in shower = 'independent' if unsupervised/unaided.

(Collin et al., 1988)