

Modified Japanese Orthopaedic Association (mJOA) Scoring System

The mJOA is used in international guidelines for the management of DCM (Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy). The mJOA scoring system is scored from 0 to 18 points. A lower score represents more severe DCM than a higher score (as per table below).

The mJOA comprises four parts: movement in the arms, movement in the legs, feeling in the arms, and bladder control, as shown below.

I. Upper Limb Motor	
I am unable to move my hands at all	0
I can move my hands a little, but I am unable to feed myself	1
I can feed myself but, I am unable to button my shirt	2
I can button up my shirt, but I find it very difficult and it takes a long time	3
I can button my shirt with only slight difficulty	4
My hands work normally	5
II. Lower Limb Motor	
I am paralysed and unable to move or feel my legs	0
I can feel my legs but I am unable to move them at all	1
I can move my legs but I cannot walk	2
I can walk but I require a walking aid	3
Able I can walk up and down stairs, but I have to hold the handrail	4
I am a little unsteady on my feet, but I can walk up and down stairs without holding the handrail	5
I am a little unsteady, but I can walk unaided	6
My legs are unaffected	7
III. Upper Limb Sensory	
I am unable to feel my hands	0
I have pain or severe loss of feeling (including numbness, tingling) in my hands	1
I have mild loss of feeling (including numbness, tingling) in my hands	2
I have no loss of feeling in my hands	3
IV. Sphincter	
I cannot control when I pass urine	0
I have marked difficulty passing urine	1
I have mild difficulty passing urine	2
I have no difficulty passing urine	3

Scoring	
Mild myelopathy	mJOA score = 15 – 17
Moderate myelopathy	mJOA score = 12 – 14
Severe myelopathy	mJOA score = 0 - 11