Medical Research Council (MRC) Scale for Muscle Strength

The Medical Research Council (MRC) Scale for Muscle Strength is a commonly used scale for assessing muscle strength from Grade 5 (normal) to Grade 0 (no visible contraction). It was originally described by the Medical Research Council in 1943 The MRC sum score was first described by Kleyweg et al (1988) for use in the Dutch Guillain-Barré trial. This score was defined as the sum of MRC scores from six muscles in the upper and lower limbs on both sides so that the score ranged from 60 (normal) to 0 (quadriplegic).

The *Criteria* requires that each of the six muscle groups listed in the table are examined bilaterally, each with a score from 0 to 5 according to the scale in the right hand column.

MRC Sum score

Muscle		Score 0 - 5	MRC scale for muscle strength (0-5)
Shoulder abductors	Left		Grade 5: Normal
	Right		
Elbow flexors	Left		Grade 4: Movement against gravity and resistance
	Right		
Wrist extensors	Left		Grade 3: Movement against gravity over (almost) the full range
	Right		
Hip flexors	Left		Grade 2: Movement of the limb but not against gravity
	Right		
Knee extensors	Left		Grade 1: Visible contraction without movement of the limb (not existent for hip flexion)
	Right		
Foot dorsiflexors	Left		Grade 0: No visible contraction
	Right		
	Total (out of 60)		MRC grade for each muscle given in full numbers: (4+/4.5 =4) (4- =3) (5- = 4)

Reproduced from Muscle Nerve 1991, Vol.14 (11), Kleyweg RP, van der Meche FGA, Schmitz PIM., Interobserver agreement in the assessment of muscle strength and functional abilities in Guillain-Barré syndrome , pp. 1103-1109, Copyright © 2004, John Wiley and Sons.

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