

Alar Ligament Test

Patient's full name:

Date accomplished:

Conductor's full name:

What you need

A comfortable examination bed for your patient

Instructions

1. You can have your patient lie down in a supine position on the examination bed or you can have them sit up straight.
2. Place one of your hands on the patient's occiput (the back of their head) and use your other hand to palpate the C2 spinous process using your index finger.
3. When you're ready, you will first do the Lateral Flexion. You will apply slight compression on the crown of the head. You will bend the patient's head to the right and to the left. Make sure you are directing their ears toward the shoulders on their respective sides.
4. Next is Rotation. You will perform this in flexion, extension, and neutral. For all three of these, you will stabilize the C2 with one of your hands while you grip the top of the head with the other. You will rotate the head to the right and to the left.
5. Last is the Lateral Shear. This one requires the patient to be seated. You will apply pressure to the C1, specifically the bony part. You will apply force to one side of the C1 in order to cause a shearing force between the C1 and C2.
6. While performing these, make sure to try and feel for any of the following:
 - Clunking
 - Shifting
 - If there is a lag in the movement or side-to-side difference while performing the Lateral Flexion
 - If there is excessive movement while performing the Rotation
 - If there is movement while applying pressure during the Lateral Shear
7. If you notice any of these while performing the test, they are positive for possible alar ligament damage/injury or a cervical spine issue, so you should endorse them for a comprehensive examination that can confirm or refute these suspicions.
8. If they don't feel any pain at all and you didn't feel any of the aforementioned things to look out for, then they are negative.

Test result: Positive Negative

Additional comments