



International Parkinson and  
Movement Disorder Society

# The Global Dystonia Severity Rating Scale (GDS)

**Authored by:**

Cynthia L. Comella, MD  
Sue Leurgans, PhD  
Joanne Wu, ScM  
Glenn T. Stebbins, PhD  
Teresa Chmura, BA

and members of The Dystonia Study Group

---

**Tel** +1 (414) 276-2145  
**Fax** +1 (414) 276-3349

555 E. Wells Street, Suite 1100  
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3823

[www.movementdisorders.org](http://www.movementdisorders.org)  
[info@movementdisorders.org](mailto:info@movementdisorders.org)

---

## **MDS Permissions**

The Global Dystonia Severity Rating Scale (GDS) is owned and licensed by the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society (MDS). Permission is required to use the scale and can be obtained by submitting a [Permissions Request Form](#) on the MDS website. For licensing inquiries, please e-mail [info@movementdisorders.org](mailto:info@movementdisorders.org).

Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, translation, or sale of any portion of the MDS Rating Scale is strictly prohibited. Changes, modifications and derivative works of the scale are not permitted without the express authorization of MDS. Including but not limited to the following, the MDS Rating Scale may not be incorporated into clinical trials, training materials, certification programs, software programs, electronic platforms, electronic medical records, databases, or devices except by permission of MDS.

## The Global Dystonia Severity Rating Scale

The Global Dystonia Severity Rating Scale (GDS) serves as an instrument to assess dystonia severity. The GDS is a global scale applied to 10 body regions. The global score is an overall score for each body region, including separate ratings for right and left limbs (proximal and distal). The total score is the sum of the scores for all the body regions. There are no modifying ratings or weighting factors in the GDS. The maximum total score of the GDS is 140.

The investigator rates the patient in relationship to all patients. If the dystonia changes during the examination, the rating for the maximal dystonia is recorded. Ten body areas are tested: 1) Eyes and upper face, 2) lower face, 3) jaw and tongue, 4) larynx, 5) neck, 6) right and left shoulder and proximal arm, 7) right and left distal arm and hand including elbow, 8) right and left pelvis and upper leg, 9) right and left distal leg and foot, and 10) trunk.

Each body area is rated from 0 to 10:

- 0 No dystonia present in that body area
- 1 Minimal dystonia
- 5 Moderate dystonia
- 10 Most severe dystonia

Patient Identification	Age	Investigator	Date

Body Area	Rating											Global Score
1. Eyes and upper face	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
2. Lower face	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
3. Jaw and Tongue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. Larynx	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. Neck	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. Shoulder and proximal arm (Right)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Shoulder and proximal arm (Left)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. Distal arm and hand including elbow (Right)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Distal arm and hand including elbow (Left)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8. Pelvis and proximal leg (Right)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Pelvis and proximal leg (Left)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9. Distal leg and foot including knee (Right)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Distal leg and foot including knee (Left)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10. Trunk	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
											<b>Total Score</b>	