



# The Apley System of Examination

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This course teaches the orthopaedic examination of patients using the Apley system. It was designed by Graham Apley in the 1940s where it was taught on the Pырford Postgraduate Course, later called the Apley Course. It centers around the mantra of look, feel, move; a system which will be reiterated throughout the following sections.

Before an examination can be performed it is essential that the patient is adequately exposed. This should involve the patient removing clothes down to their undergarments. The process is quite informative as it gives a guide to the functional status of the shoulder and elbow.

The look, feel, move system is further subdivided to prevent any significant signs and symptoms being overlooked. The patient themselves may not be aware of the signs they exhibit so it is important a thorough examination is performed.

*Look* is divided into skin, shape and position.

*Feel* into skin, soft tissues and bony points.

*Move* into active and passive movements and power.

The sequence of active movement, passive movement and then power testing is important as each subsequent examination is likely to be more aggravating than the former. Starting with a test of power will limit the value of the rest of the examination if your examination triggers or exacerbates their pain.

There are also a number of special tests which vary depending on the joint being examined. For example a key part of shoulder examination is rotator cuff testing, for which there are specific movements to isolate each muscle.

To complete the examination of a joint, assess the joint above and below. This is important as referred pain from one joint may be perceived as coming from another, especially when the disease process involves the hip. If indicated, an x-ray should then be requested to complete the examination.