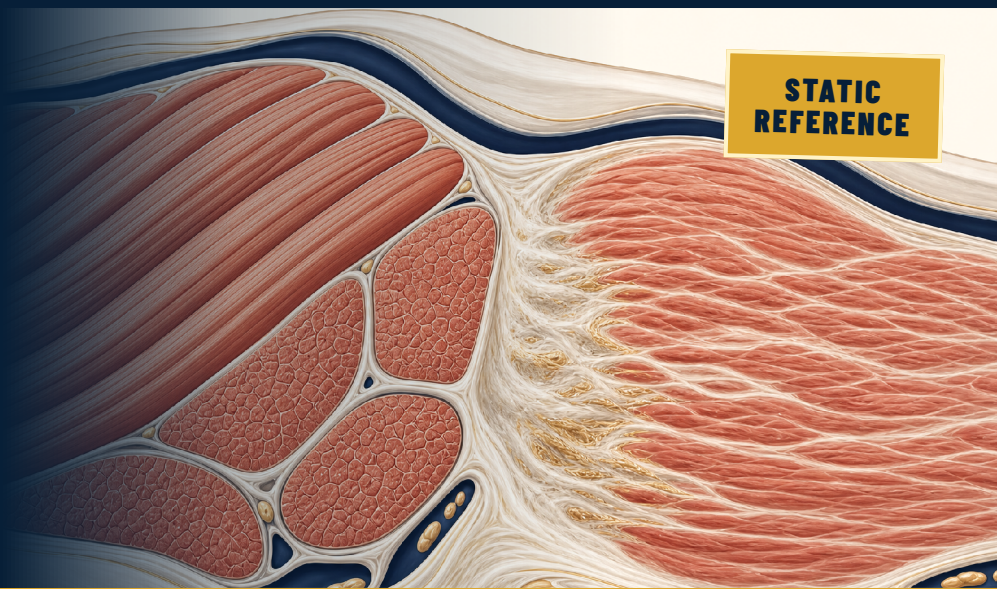


MUSCLE INJURIES

VA RATING GUIDE

The injured muscle group and the wound history belong in the same rating picture.



MUSCLE GROUP // FUNCTION // HISTORY

The injured muscle group and the wound history belong in the same rating picture.

01

WHAT THE CURRENT RATING FRAMEWORK ASKS FOR

SEVERITY IS BUILT FROM THE INJURY, HISTORY, COMPLAINTS, AND FINDINGS

Muscle injury codes identify groups by the movement they control. Under 38 CFR 4.56, the slight-to-severe classification considers the original wound or trauma, treatment history, consistent cardinal signs, scars, loss of tissue or fascia, strength, endurance, coordination, and retained fragments.

GROUP

Identify every damaged muscle group and the movement each group controls.

HISTORY

Preserve the original injury track, debridement, infection, hospitalization, surgery, and recovery.

COMPARISON

Compare strength, endurance, tissue loss, tone, scars, and coordination with the sound side.

02

SERVICE-CONNECTION PATHS

DIRECT

A penetrating wound, blunt trauma, tear, crush injury, or other muscle damage occurred in service.

SURGICAL RESIDUAL

An in-service procedure or treatment for a service-connected condition produced distinct muscle damage.

SECONDARY

A service-connected disability caused or aggravated a separate muscle disorder through a supported medical mechanism.

04

BUILD THE RECORD

1

ORIGINAL INJURY

Service records, wound description, procedure, infection, and hospitalization.

2

MUSCLE GROUP

Exact group, side, dominant extremity, and function controlled.

3

SCAR AND TISSUE

Entrance or exit scars, adhesion, fascia or muscle loss, and tone.

4

STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE

Side-to-side testing, fatigue threshold, coordination, and work capacity.

5

IMAGING

Retained fragments, fracture, tissue loss, or other objective findings.

6

DISTINCT RESIDUALS

Separate muscle, nerve, joint, tendon, and scar effects without duplicating function.

06

INJURY MECHANISMS AND POSSIBLE RESIDUALS

The direction depends on the injured anatomy. Each residual needs its own diagnosis and distinct function.

EVENTS THAT CAN INJURE MUSCLE

Penetrating wound // blunt or crush trauma
// muscle tear // fracture with tissue damage
// surgical injury

CONDITIONS MUSCLE INJURY CAN LEAVE

Weakness // limited motion // painful or adherent scars // nerve damage // tendon or joint impairment // retained-fragment residuals

07

DO THIS, NOT THAT

DO

- Name the muscle group.
- Preserve the original injury history.
- Compare strength and endurance side to side.

DO NOT

- Rate only the visible scar.
- Ignore cardinal muscle symptoms.
- Duplicate the same movement loss.