

BACK CLAIMS

SPINE EVIDENCE GUIDE

An orthopedic blueprint for service connection, examination evidence, functional loss, and the current rating schedule.

STRUCTURAL FIELD REFERENCE

FOUR POINTS TO UNDERSTAND

ROM

MOTION AND FLARE ESTIMATES

Record regional motion, pain onset, repetition, guarding, spasm, gait, contour, and flare-related loss.

NEURO

NEUROLOGIC EXAMINATION

Strength, sensation, reflexes, nerve distribution, EMG, bowel or bladder findings, and side matter.

IMAGING

MRI, X-RAY, AND SURGERY

Imaging supports diagnosis but does not replace functional evidence or nexus proof.

NEXUS

SERVICE OR SECONDARY RATIONALE

The opinion should address injury, chronicity, altered gait, service-connected primaries, and other causes.

Use the regulation in effect for the rating period. Measure functional loss accurately, keep distinct manifestations separate, and avoid compensating the same symptom twice.