

BACK CLAIMS

THORACOLUMBAR RANGE-OF-MOTION GUIDE

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



STRUCTURAL FIELD REFERENCE

FOUR POINTS TO UNDERSTAND

NORMAL

FORWARD FLEXION TO 90 DEGREES

Normal combined thoracolumbar motion is 240 degrees for VA purposes.

10%

FLEXION OVER 60 THROUGH 85

Other 10 percent routes include combined motion over 120 through 235 or qualifying tenderness, guarding, spasm, or fracture.

20%

FLEXION OVER 30 THROUGH 60

Other 20 percent routes include combined motion at 120 or less or guarding or spasm causing abnormal gait or contour.

40%

FLEXION AT 30 OR LESS

Favorable ankylosis of the entire thoracolumbar spine also meets 40 percent.

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