

Essential Functions of a Medical Assistant

Function Ability Category	Representative/Activity Attribute
Gross Motor Skills	Move within confined spaces Sit and maintain balance Stand and maintain balance Reach above shoulders (e.g., attaching bag to IV pole) Reach below waist (e.g., plug electrical appliance into wall outlets)
Fine Motor Skills	Pick up objects with hands Grasp small objects with hands (e.g., IV tubing, pen) Write with pen or pencil Key/type (e.g., use a computer keyboard) Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate a syringe) Twist (e.g., turn objects/knobs using hands) Squeeze with finger (e.g., eye dropper) Hand/eye coordination Dexterity of fingers and hands to perform variety of lab tasks using needles and performing venipuncture
Physical Endurance	Stand for extended periods of time (e.g. at patient side during surgical or therapeutic procedure) Sustain repetitive movements (e.g., CPR) Maintain physical tolerance (e.g., work entire shift) Work quickly and accurately under stressful conditions at a fast pace
Physical Strength	Push and pull weight (e.g., position patient on exam table, push patient in wheelchair) Support weight of patient (e.g., ambulate patient) Lift weight (e.g., pick up a child, transfer patient from wheelchair to exam table and the reverse) Move light weight objects (e.g., IV poles) Move heavy objects Defend self against combative patient Carry equipment, supplies Use upper body strength (e.g., perform CPR, physically restrain a patient) Squeeze with hands (e.g., operate fire extinguisher)
Mobility	Twist Bend Stoop/squat Move quickly (e.g., response to an emergency) Climb (e.g., ladders/stools, stairs) Walk

Hearing	<p>Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person to person report)</p> <p>Hear faint voices</p> <p>Hear faint body sounds (blood pressure sounds, apical pulse)</p> <p>Hear situations when not able to see lips (e.g., when masks are used)</p> <p>Hear auditory alarms (e.g., monitors, fire alarms, call bells)</p> <p>Hear muffled sounds with stethoscope</p> <p>Hear in order to communicate effectively with patient</p>
Visual	<p>See objects inches away (e.g., information on a computer screen, skin conditions)</p> <p>See objects feet away (e.g., patient in a room)</p> <p>See objects several feet away (e.g., client at end of hall)</p> <p>Use depth of perception</p> <p>Use peripheral vision</p> <p>Distinguish color (e.g., color codes on supplies, charts, bed)</p> <p>Distinguish color intensity (e.g., flushed skin, skin paleness)</p> <p>Visual acuity to read small print, gauges, and color vision for lab interpretation and to use equipment for venipuncture correctly</p>
Tactile	<p>Feel vibrations (e.g., palpate pulses)</p> <p>Detect temperature (e.g., skin solutions)</p> <p>Feel differences in surface characteristics (e.g., skin turgor, rashes)</p> <p>Feel differences in sizes, shapes (e.g., palpate vein, identify body landmarks)</p> <p>Detect environment temperature (e.g., check for drafts)</p>
Smell	<p>Detect odors from client (e.g. foul-smelling drainage, alcohol breath, etc.)</p> <p>Detect smoke</p> <p>Detect gases or noxious smells</p>
Emotional Stability	<p>Establish therapeutic boundaries</p> <p>Provide patient with emotional support</p> <p>Adapt to changing environment/stress</p> <p>Deal with the unexpected (e.g., patient going bad, crisis)</p> <p>Focus attention on task</p> <p>Monitor own emotions</p> <p>Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently</p> <p>Handle strong emotions (e.g., grief)</p> <p>Perform under stress</p> <p>React with controlled emotions in emergency situations</p>
Reading	<p>Read and understand written documents (e.g., policies, protocols)</p>

Arithmetic Competence	<p>Read and understand columns of writing (flow sheet, charts)</p> <p>Read digital displays</p> <p>Read graphic printouts (e.g., EKG)</p> <p>Calibrate equipment</p> <p>Convert numbers to and/or from the Metric System</p> <p>Read graphs (e.g., vital sign sheets)</p> <p>Tell time</p> <p>Measure time (e.g., count duration of contractions, etc.)</p> <p>Count rates (e.g., drips/minute, pulse)</p> <p>Use measuring tools (e.g., thermometer)</p> <p>Read measurement marks (e.g., measurement tapes, scales, etc.)</p> <p>Add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers</p> <p>Compute fractions (e.g., medication dosages)</p> <p>Use a calculator</p> <p>Write number in records</p>
Analytical Thinking	<p>Transfer knowledge from one situation to another</p> <p>Process information</p> <p>Evaluate outcomes</p> <p>Problem-solve</p> <p>Prioritize tasks</p> <p>Use short term memory</p> <p>Use long term memory</p>
Critical Thinking	<p>Identify cause-effect relationships</p> <p>Plan/control activities for others</p> <p>Synthesize knowledge and skills</p> <p>Sequence information</p> <p>Perform with minimal supervision</p>
Interpersonal Skills	<p>Negotiate interpersonal conflict</p> <p>Respect differences in patients</p> <p>Establish positive rapport with patients</p> <p>Establish positive rapport with co-workers</p> <p>Relate effectively and appropriately to patient and patient's needs</p>
Communication Skills	<p>Patient teaching within scope of practice (e.g., patient/family about healthcare)</p> <p>Explain procedures</p> <p>Give oral reports (e.g., report on patient's condition to others)</p> <p>Interact with others (e.g. health care workers)</p> <p>Speak on the telephone</p> <p>Influence people</p> <p>Direct activities of others</p> <p>Convey information through writing (e.g., progress notes)</p> <p>Communicate orally and in writing with clarity to patients of various social and ethnic backgrounds and various professional levels</p> <p>Be rational and concise in written and oral communication</p>