

Critical-Care Pain Observation Tool (CPOT)

Item	Options	Points
Facial expression	Relaxed, neutral: No muscle tension observed	0
	Tense: Frowning, brow lowering, orbit tightening, levator contraction, or other change such as opening eyes or tearing during procedures	1
	Grimacing: All of the above plus eyelids tightly closed; may have mouth open or bite the endotracheal tube	2
Body movements	Absence of movements: Does not move at all, or normal position with movements not aimed at the pain site	0
	Protection: Slow, cautious movements, touching or rubbing the pain site, seeking attention through movements	1
	Restlessness/agitation: Pulling tube, trying to sit up, thrashing, not following commands, striking at staff, trying to climb out of bed	2
Muscle tension	Relaxed: No resistance to passive movements	0
	Tense, rigid: Resistance to passive movements	1
	Very tense or rigid: Strong resistance to passive movements or unable to complete them	2
Compliance with the ventilator (intubated) OR vocalization (extubated)	Tolerating or normal speech: Alarms not activated, easy ventilation; or talking in normal tone or no sound	0
	Coughing or moaning: Coughing, alarms may sound but stop on their own; or sighing, moaning	1
	Fighting vent or crying out: Asynchrony, blocking ventilation, alarms frequently activated; or crying out, sobbing	2

Interpretation

0–2	Pain unlikely. Behaviors do not suggest significant pain. Keep reassessing on your unit's schedule, before and during procedures, and after any change.
3–8	Pain likely. A score above 2 suggests pain. Look for the source, treat per your pain protocol or notify the provider, and reassess CPOT after the intervention to confirm the effect.

Total score: _____ Date: _____ Assessed by: _____

Gélinas, Fillion, Puntillo, Viens & Fortier, 2006 (American Journal of Critical Care). Sources: Gélinas et al. Validation of the CPOT in adult patients, Am J Crit Care 2006 (PubMed); Gélinas et al. Sensitivity and specificity of the CPOT, J Pain Symptom Manage 2009; CPOT scoring form and behavior descriptions (adapted from Gélinas 2006); LHSC: Critical-Care Pain Observation Tool form; Health Assessment: Pain Assessment in Critical Care (TMU Pressbooks). Free calculator and full guide: nursingscales.com/cpot-pain-scale/ · Educational material; does not replace clinical judgment or facility protocols.