

# Sensory Examination

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## • Preparation and general Principles

- Introduce yourself
- Privacy :- Ensure the room is Private (Close the Curtains or the door)
- Lighting :- Ensure the room is well-lit  
(Good illumination is essential)
- Position and Exposure :- Position the Patient comfortably and expose the limbs being tested
- Eyes Closed :- Explain that the patient must keep their eyes closed during the test
- The distal to Proximal rule :- Always start at the furthest point (fingertips). If sensation is intact distally, stop the exam for that limb (deep sensation)

- Superficial sensation  $\Rightarrow$  test each dermatome individually
- Nociception (Pain sensation)

- Definition :- testing the perception of painful stimulus

- Tool :- A sterile Neuro-tip (a specialized pain with a sharp end)

- Technique :-
  - 1- Demonstrations :- with the patient's eyes open, touch them with the sharp end  $\rightarrow$  Ask :- did you feel it?
  - 2- Testings :- with eyes closed, apply the stimuli randomly.

- Questions :- "did you feel it"

### - Fine touch

- Definition :- testing the skin's ability to perceive delicate tactile stimuli

- Tool :- Cotton

- Technique :-

- Dab, don't stroke: touch skin lightly in a single spot don't drag the cotton across the skin

(dragging stimulates different receptors)

↳ reference: Bates' Guide to Physical Examination

### - Temp sensation

- testing the ability to sense heat (for example cold objects such as the coldness of a tuning fork)

(we'll use the same technique we used in pain sensation)

### • Deep sensation

#### \* Vibration sense

- Tool: tuning fork (128 Hz)
- Procedure:
  - strike the fork and place it on the sternum or any bony prominence.
  - Distal Point: the tip of the finger
- Ask: "do you feel the vibration?"
- If they feel it distally stop if not, move proximally until they feel it.

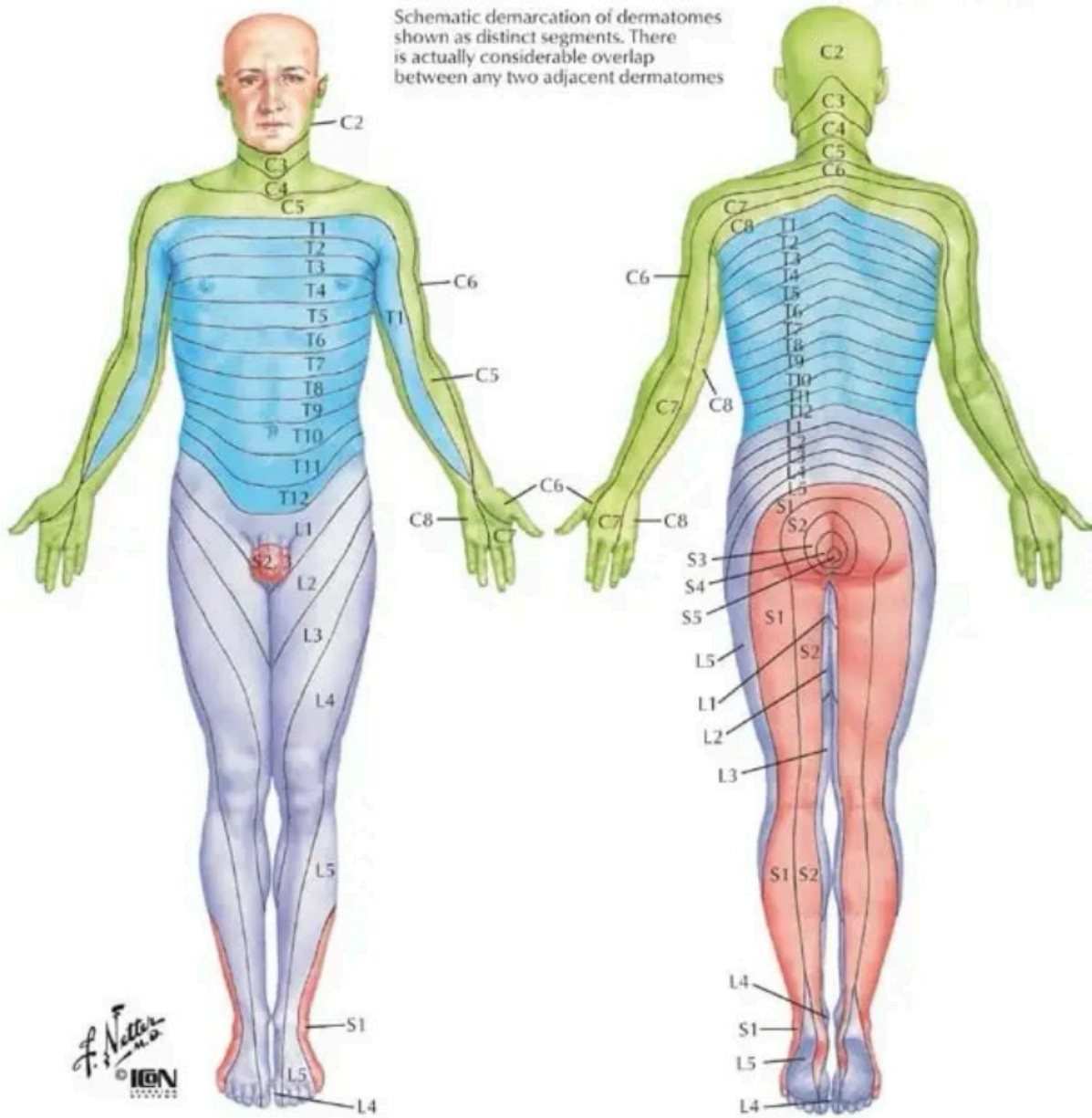
## \* Proprioception (joint position sense)

- Procedure: hold the sides of the patient's distal digit
- Demonstration:- show them "up" and "down" with eyes open first
- testing:- with eyes closed, move the digit
- If correct 3 times distally stop, if they fail move to the next proximal joint ...etc

## • Cortical sensation

- \* Stereognosis:- Identifying a familiar object (key, eraser, ...etc) in the hand
- \* Graphesthesia:- Identifying a number drawn on the palm
- \* Two point discrimination:- Feeling two distinct points at a very small distance.

Schematic demarcation of dermatomes shown as distinct segments. There is actually considerable overlap between any two adjacent dermatomes



Good luck