

# General Joint Evaluation Hierarchy

**Is there schedularly compensable limitation of motion?**

If so, grant an evaluation under the appropriate diagnostic code(s) specific to the joint in question (§4.71a).

If  
Not

**Is the joint painful?**

If so, grant the minimum compensable rating under the appropriate diagnostic code specific to the joint in question (§4.59). <sup>1</sup>

If  
Not

**Is the non-painful joint arthritic and limited even slightly (irrespective of compensability) in its range of motion?**

If so, award a single 10-percent evaluation under 5010, hyphenated to reflect the affected joint's involvement(ex. 5201-5010) <sup>2</sup>

If  
Not

**Are 2 or more arthritic major joints (or minor joint groups) service connected, but otherwise completely noncompensable?**

If so, a single 10-percent evaluation may be assigned for all affected joints under DC 5010. <sup>3</sup>

If  
Not

**If all else fails, grant the joint a noncompensable evaluation in accordance with §4.31.**

1) This evaluation may only be granted once per joint, regardless of potential pain in multiple directions of active motion, and may not be granted in combination with other compensable evaluations based on LOM or arthritis of the same joint (Ref. M21-1 III.iv.4.A).

2) This evaluation may only be applied once per affected joint (Ref. M21-1 III.iv.4.A).

3) This arthritis evaluation must be discontinued if at any future point any of its constituent joints becomes independently compensable under other rating criteria (i.e. for painful or lost motion) (§4.71a, DC 5003, Note (1)).