



Clinical Skills

Best Practices



The Clinical Skills collections provide a consistent, 360-degree look at nursing skills to ensure students have a solid understanding of how to safely and effectively perform them. Each features a seven-part framework to guide students through all aspects of the skill.

Understanding Each Component of Clinical Skills

Quick Sheet – provides a concise, step-by-step overview of the skill procedures

Extended Text – offers an in-depth look at all aspects of care to consider with the skills. This may include safety alerts, patient education, delegation opportunities, monitor and care considerations, considerations for special populations, expected/unexpected outcomes, documentation guidelines, and evidence-based references.

- Use the various care considerations for discussion in lab to help students connect the psychomotor skill to a patient scenario and build clinical judgment (for example: pediatric/geriatric considerations, home care considerations, etc.)
- Encourage students who struggle with a skill in clinical to review the Extended Text for that skill as part of remediation
- Use the Expected Outcomes and Unexpected Outcomes as discussion/talking points, posing “What if” questions for students
- Look at the Delegation section to bring attention to nursing roles as well as expectations and education for assistive personnel related to the skill.
- Use the Documentation Guidelines to guide students through documenting skills practiced during lab

Supplies – a list of supplies necessary to perform the skill

- Help students prepare for clinical by instructing them to gather necessary supplies to perform a skill during lab. Provide an assortment of supplies. Students can use the supply list to guide them.

Videos – demonstration of each step the skill, performed by a nurse in a realistic and current patient-care setting

- Encourage students to review the video prior to coming to lab.
- Bring up the video in class to connect lab skills and clinical care to the class discussion.
- Watch the video together with a clinical group and compare/contrast best practice to what they have seen in their clinical setting.
- Encourage students to use the illustration to help them gather the appropriate supplies. It is especially helpful when they don't know what a supply is from the supply list. Guide them to use the illustration to identify the correct items.



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Illustrations – includes pictures of supplies with roll-over labeling to familiarize students with each piece of equipment needed to perform the skill.

Test – includes questions to review basic understanding of the skill. Test questions provide rationales to help students review/remediate and test scores report to the gradebook, allowing faculty to track student performance.

- Consider using the test as a “Ticket to Lab”. Assign review of pertinent skills to students and instruct them to complete the skill test associated with each skill. Require a minimum score, for example, 80% or 100%. Students are allowed multiple attempts on the test, and receive rationale for questions missed, enabling them to achieve the desired score and ensure basic understanding of the skill prior to coming to lab.

Checklist – printable for use in assessing student skill competency

Additional Tips for Implementing Clinical Skills

- Discuss how you will use the skills as a program. Students will benefit from consistent expectations.
- Consider assigning review of pertinent skills as part of student preparation for simulation or clinical.
- Pair a case study or simulation with associated skills for an opportunity to bring in the psychomotor domain of learning to the patient care scenario. This is especially helpful for clinical make-up experiences.
- Use for remediation when students struggle or are unsuccessful with a skill in clinical.