Resident Guide
ICD-10

AAOS
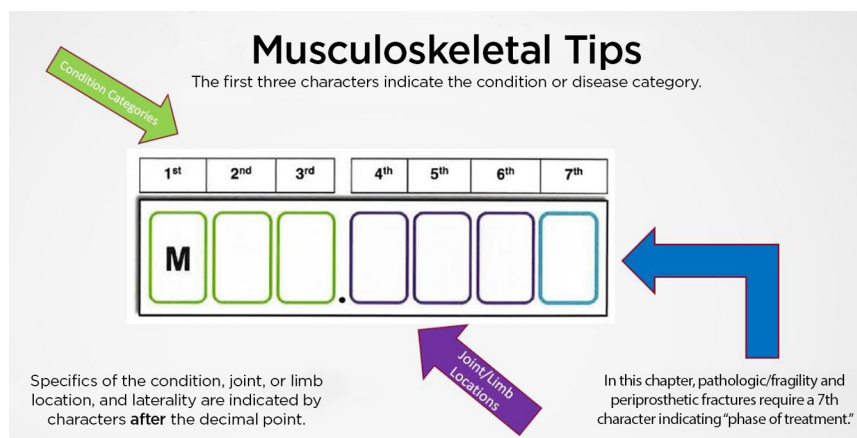AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Why ICD-10?

Payers use diagnosis codes to:

• Deny payment based on lack of medical necessity

• Adjudicate claims possibly resulting in paybacks and penalties

• Build payment policies and coverage determinations
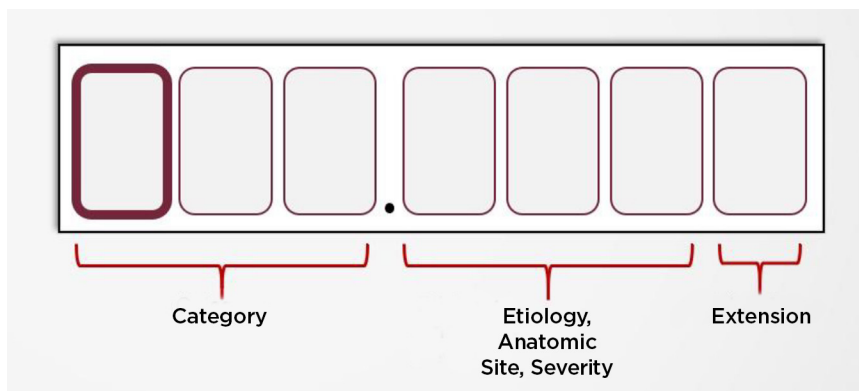
Chapters You Should Know

M	Diseases of Musculoskeletal System and Connective Tissue – almost all are **chronic** conditions
S	Injury, Poisoning and Certain Other Consequences of External Causes – almost all are **acute**, i.e., fractures, tears
T	Where most of the **complications** appear
V	External causes of morbidity; have not yet routinely been required
Z	Factors influencing health status and contact with health services

Composition of an ICD-10 Code

• Range from 3 to 7 characters

• The first character is always alpha

• The second character is always numeric

• Letter comes first, followed by two digits, a period, and three more digits

• "X" can be a place holder in spot for a number

• Some codes require a final letter

Musculoskeletal Tips

The first three characters indicate the condition or disease category.

Condition Categories

| 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | 6th | 7th |

M

Specifics of the condition, joint, or limb location, and laterality are indicated by characters **after** the decimal point.

Joint/Limb Locations

In this chapter, pathologic/fragility and periprosthetic fractures require a 7th character indicating "phase of treatment."

Building an ICD-10 Code

Details Needed:

• Right or left?

• Open or closed?

• Which visit?

Example: Open bite of right buttock
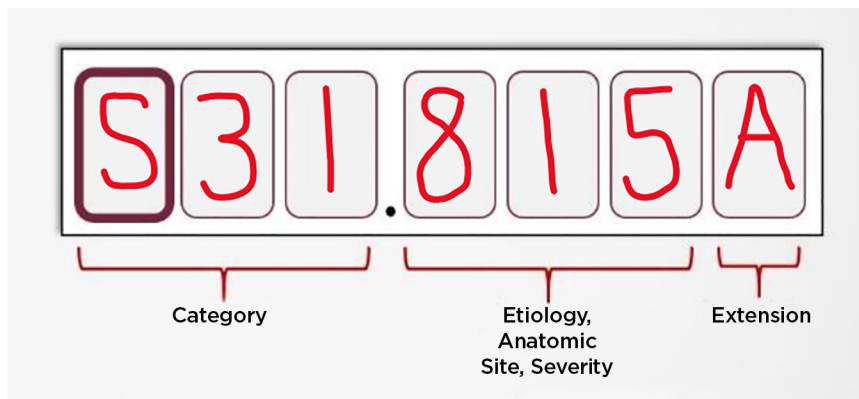
S is for the injury
A is for the initial encounter

Tip: S31.815D would be the code for subsequent encounter and S31.815S would be the code for sequelae such as infection.

Tips

• Avoid unspecified codes

• Simply add last digit to convert an unspecified code to "right" or "left"

For Example: Primary osteoarthritis of hip

• M16.0 – Bilateral

• M16.11 – Right

• M16.12 – Left

• M16.13 – Unspecfied (which should never be used)

Musculoskeletal Tips: 5th & 6th Characters

Musculoskeletal Chapter 13							
5th Character = @ anatomic location				**6th Character**			
#	Limb	#	Joint	R	L	U	
0	Unspecified	0	Unspecified	1	2	9	
1	Shoulder	1	Shoulder	1	2	9	
2	Upper Arm	2	Elbow	1	2	9	
3	Forearm	3	Wrist	1	2	9	
4	Hand	4	Hand/Finger	1	2	9	
5	Thigh	5	Hip	1	2	9	
6	Lower Leg	6	Knee	1	2	9	
7	Ankle/Foot	6	Ankle & Foot/ Toe	1	2	9	
8	Other	8	Verebrae/Other				
9	Multiple	9	Polyarthritis/ Multiple Sites				

1st	2nd	3rd		4th	5th	6th	7th
M			.		@		

Musculoskeletal Tips: 7th character

Musculoskeletal Chapter 13 Vertebral Fatigue Fracture	
7th character (M48.4 and M48.5)	
A	Initial encounter for fracture
D	Subsequent counter for fracture W **routine healing**
G	Subsequent counter for fracture W **delayed healing**
S	Sequela

Pathologic/Atypical Fracture	
7th character (M80 and M84)	
A	Initial encounter for fracture
D	Subsequent counter for fracture W **routine healing**
G	Subsequent counter for fracture W **delayed healing**
K	Subsequent counter for fracture W **nonunion**
G	Subsequent counter for fracture W **malunion**
S	Sequela

Section S: Injury (S00-S99) 2nd and 3rd characters

1st	2nd	3rd		4th	5th	6th	7th
M	@	R	.				

7th Character injury

The number in the second position indicates the general location of the injury.

Range	Location
S00-S09	Injuries to the head
S10-S19	Injuries to the neck
S20-S29	Injuries to the thorax
S30-S39	Injuries to the abdomen, lower back, lumbar spine, pelvis, and external genitals
S40-S49	Injuries to the shoulder and upper arm
S50-S59	Injuries to the elbow and forearm
S60-S69	Injuries to the wrist and hand
S70-S79	Injuries to the hip and thigh
S80-S89	Injuries to the knee and lower leg
S90-S99	Injuries to the ankle and foot

Note: Injury (s) and Other Consequences of External Causes (T) is the largest chapter in the ICD-10CM book. The architecture for injury codes is very consistent for injuries beginning with the letter "S." Every code beginning with an "S" or "T" requires a 7th character to describe the phase of treatment.

All traumatic injuries begin with the letter "S."

Section S: 7ᵗʰ Character – Non-fracture

Acute injuries that are NOT fractures have 3 options for the 7ᵗʰ character.
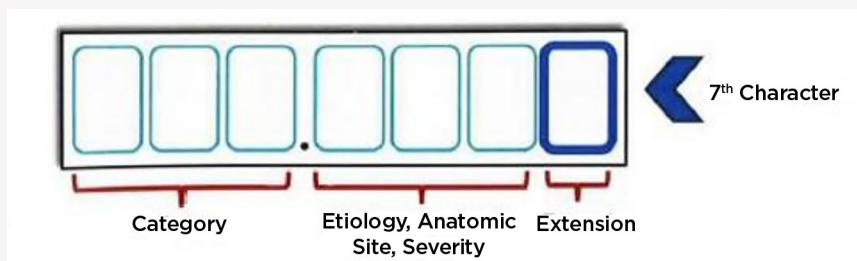
The terms "initial" and "subsequent" here have NOTHING to do with the CPT description of new and established patient visits.

7ᵗʰ Character for Injuries (Not Fractures)		
7ᵗʰ Character	**ICD-10 Short Descriptor**	**You Think**
A	Initial encounter	Active treatment
D	Subsequent encounter	Routine healing or follow-up
S	Sequela	Cause of current illness or injury

Tips

• "A", initial encounter, is used while the patient is receiving active treatment for the condition. Examples of active treatment are: surgical treatment, emergency department encounter, and evaluation and continued active treatment by the same or a different physician.

• The 7ᵗʰ character selection is based on the phase of treatment: active vs. healing vs. sequela

• The 7ᵗʰ character must ALWAYS be in the 7ᵗʰ position

• The 7ᵗʰ character is based on whether the patient is undergoing active treatment and not whether the provider is seeing the patient for the first time

Section T: Poisoning and Certain Other Consequences of External Causes (T07-T98)

"T" codes most often used by orthopaedic surgeons	
T07	Unspecified multiple injuries
T14	Injury of unspecified body region
T15-T19	Effects of foreign body entering through natural orifice
T20-T32	Burns and corrosions
T33-T34	Frostbite
T36-T50	Poisoning by, adverse effect of, and underexposing drugs, medicaments, and biological substances
T51-T65	Toxic effects of substances chiefly non-medicinal source
T66-T78	Other and unspecified effects of external causes
T79	Certain early complications of trauma (shock, compartment syndrome, air emboli)
T80-T88	Complications of surgical and medical care, NEC (wear, osteolysis, loosening, dislocation)

These codes do require a 7th character indicating the "phase of treatment."

Note: Some complication codes beginning with "T" are found in the Injury Chapter Architecture are not as consistent as injury codes beginning with "S."

Fracture Documentation

Laterality & Location

Encounter

Open/closed

Classification/Category/Cause

Fracture pattern

Alignment

Result

Location and **L**aterality	**Right/Left and name of bone plus EXACT location on the bone; example: proximal, distal, upper end, lower end, shaft, head, coronoid process, base of neck, mid-cervical, first lumbar, transverse posterior, dome, medial wall, tibial tuberosity, tibial spine, bicondylar.**
Encounter: look-up term initial and subsequent	Addresses the assignment of the 7th character for injuries and describes the phase of treatment. This is **not** the same as "new and established patient visit" in CPT. In ICD-10, the encounter with the short descriptor initial vs. subsequent addresses the phase of injury treatment: type of healing. "Initial" is used in the active phase of injury treatment (e.g., ER, surgery, or office). "Subsequent" is the term that begins the descriptors for treatment following the acute phase and is used to describe the healing phase. It is also the term beginning the descriptors describing delayed healing, nonunion, and malunion of fractures, which are additionally described under "results" below.
Open or closed	Fracture (no documentation default: **closed**)
Classification	Traumatic Gustilo, Salter-Harris, Neer, Zones, or pelvis
Category	Physeal, osteoporosis age-related pathologic, stress, atypical
Cause	Medication, age, neoplasm, other disease
Fracture Pattern	Transverse, oblique, spiral communicated, segmental longitudinal, greenstick
Alignment	Displaced vs. non-displaced (no documentation default: **displaced**)
Result	Routine healing, delayed healing, malunion, nonunion (if there is no documentation default: **routine healing**)

Resources

- AAOS Code-X
- AAOS Global Service Data for Orthopaedic Surgery
- Karen Zupko & Associates/AAOS Coding Courses
- American Medical Association
    - ICD-10-CM, The Official Codebook
    - CPT Codebook
    - CPT Assistant