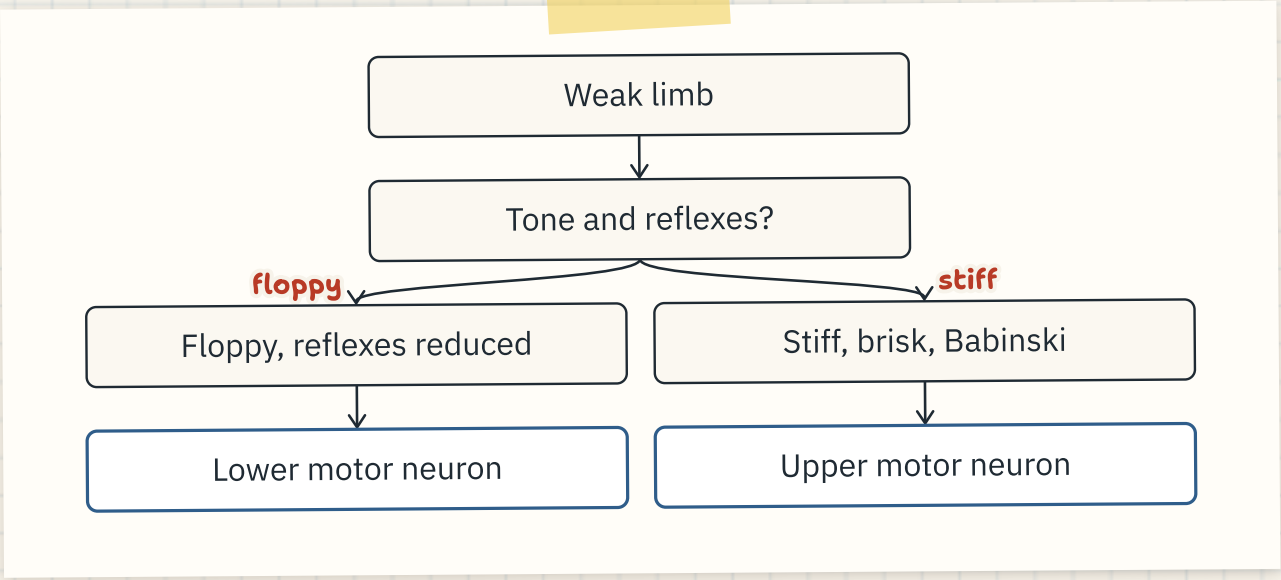
# Upper vs lower motor neuron

Place the lesion from the signs




## Step by step

1. Weak limb: check tone and reflexes
2. Check the plantar response
3. Look for fasciculations and wasting
4. Decide the side: above or below the crossing

| Sign | Upper | Lower |
|---|---|---|
| Tone | Spastic | Low |
| Reflexes | Brisk | Reduced or absent |
| Plantar | Babinski | No Babinski |
| Fasciculations | None | Present |
| Wasting | Not marked | Yes |

Signs side by side

### Rule of thumb

**Upper: stiff, brisk, upgoing toe**
**Lower: floppy, twitching, wasting**

## Exam traps

- Upper and lower signs together mean both neurons are involved.
- Above the pyramidal decussation, upper motor neuron signs are opposite; in the cord, the same side.
- After a sudden cord injury, spinal shock can look flaccid and areflexic first.
- The Babinski sign is normal in infants.



For exam study only, not medical advice. Follow local guidelines and your lab's ranges.
© 2026 Medservatory, a project of ADMR Solutions Ltd. Free to print and share for personal study.