Grade 0
Normal conditions. Abnormalities not related to arthritis, such as marginal bone deposition, may be present.

Grade I
Slight abnormality. One or more of the following lesions are present: periarticular soft-tissue swelling, periarticular osteoporosis and slight joint space narrowing. When possible, use for comparison a normal contralateral or a previous film of the joint in the same patients, as demonstrated in the standard series. The standard series illustrates a characteristic osteoporosis and joint space narrowing, whereas no attempt was made to demonstrate the appearance of soft tissue. Soft tissue swelling and osteoporosis may be reversible. This stage represents an early, uncertain phase of arthritis or a later phase without destruction. Compatible appearances may occur without arthritis in old age, Sudeck’s atrophy, etc.

Grade II
Define early abnormality. Erosion and joint space narrowing corresponding to the standards. Erosion is obligatory except in the weight-bearing joints.

Grade III
Medium destructive abnormality. Erosion and joint space narrowing corresponding to the standards. Erosion is obligatory in all joints.

Grade IV
Severe destructive abnormality. Erosion and joint space narrowing corresponding to the standards. Bone deformation is present in the weight-bearing joints.

Grade V
Mutilating abnormality. The original articular surfaces have disappeared. Gross bone deformation is present in the weight-bearing joints. Dislocation and bony ankylosis, being late and secondary, should not be considered in the grading; if present, the grading should be made according to the concomitant bone destruction or deformation.

There may sometimes, especially in the erosive phase of arthritis, be some disparity between the degree of erosion and the narrowing of the joint space, because loosening of joint ligaments and the presence of excess joint fluid may cause widening of the joint space. If so, the degree of erosion should be the decision factor when using the present grading system.