

Clinical Support Services
Division of Neurosurgery

Care of Your Back Following Lumbar Spine Surgery

February 2008

*Working in Partnership to Provide a
Quality Healthcare Service*

Information about you

As part of your care, when you come to the hospital, information about you is shared between members of a health care team, some of whom you may not meet. It may be used to help train any staff involved in your care. Information we collect may also be used after you have been treated to help us to maintain and improve the quality of our care, to plan services, or to research into new developments.

We may pass on information to other health organisations to help improve the quality of care provided by the NHS generally.

All information is treated as strictly confidential, and is not given to anyone who does not need it. If you have any concerns please ask your doctor, or the person caring for you.

Under the Data Protection Act (1998), Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any information we hold about you.

DISCHARGE AND FOLLOW-UP

Prior to being discharged from hospital you will need to be able to complete your exercises, walk short distances comfortably and be able to walk up and down a flight of stairs (if you have them).

Not every patient is routinely followed up in physiotherapy out-patients. It is your responsibility to continue with your exercises and back care independently. If you continue to have any pain, stiffness or weakness your Neurosurgeon may decide to refer you for physiotherapy.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Hull Royal Infirmary Physiotherapy Department (Ask for Neurosurgical Physiotherapists)	01482 67 4539
Hull Royal Infirmary Ward 4	01482 67 4777

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been produced to give you information about how to care for your back after surgery.

Most of your answers should have been answered by this booklet. It is not meant to replace discussion between you and your Physiotherapist or Neurosurgeon, but may act as a starting point for discussion.

Your consultant should have explained the operation procedure and the risks / benefits. This booklet will concentrate on providing you with information on the Physiotherapy input you can expect after surgery.

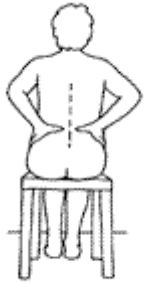
If after reading this booklet, you require further explanation please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team who has been caring for you.

PHYSIOTHERAPY AFTER SURGERY

In most circumstances you will be reviewed by the physiotherapist on the first day after your surgery (in some cases you may even be reviewed on the same day). The physiotherapist will assess your limb movement and sensation and will teach you a series of exercises (which are described later in this booklet) to help you to get your back moving.

The physiotherapist will also teach you how to get out of bed and encourage you to begin walking. You may have some attachments such as drips, catheter and drains. These do not prevent you from walking, although you may require some assistance initially.

You will also be expected to sit out into a chair for short periods from the first day after surgery.



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Sit on a stool or upright chair
place thumbs on your back either side of your spine.
Tense your stomach and feel your back muscles swell into your thumbs . Hold for 5-10
seconds. Do this ten times.



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sit on all fours with your hips in line with your shoulders.
Pull and hollow out your tummy, hold 5-10 seconds. Do this ten times.

GENERAL ADVICE

Following surgery you will need to care for your back to ensure that the operation is a success and that potential post-operative complications can be minimised.

It is important to strike a balance between periods of activity and inactivity. Inactivity can be just as harmful to your back as overactivity.

LYING

A good firm support is usually desirable; a mattress that is too soft will provide you with little support. You are free to move around in bed, and practicing rolling from side to side will make transferring in and out of bed much easier.

It is important to minimise the strain on your back when getting in and out of bed. To get out of bed, roll onto your side and swing your legs over the edge of the bed, whilst pushing up with your arms (see following diagram). Sit on the edge of the bed for a moment before standing up.





RIGHT



WRONG

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Showers are initially better for you as sitting in a bath increases the pressure through your lower back. You can resume baths once sitting is comfortable. If you have concerns please discuss this with the Occupational Therapist on the Ward prior to discharge. Initially when washing you will need to keep your wound dry, the Nurse looking after you will be able to advise you on how to do this.

DRIVING

Always ensure that your driving position allows you to maintain a good posture. Long distances should be avoided unless interspersed with regular stops. Get out of the car, walk about and stretch. It is your responsibility to ensure insurance cover prior to commencing driving after your surgery.

WORK

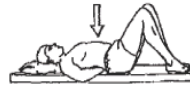
Return to work will depend very much upon the individual and the type of work you do. It is important you ask your Neurosurgeon when it is safe to return to work.

EXERCISES

These exercises are designed to improve the movement and strength in your back, prevent muscle spasm and help the healing process. They should be carried out approximately three times a day. Begin by doing 2 or 3 of each exercise and gradually build up from there, aiming to build up to performing 15 minutes of exercise at each session. If you experience any increase in pain cease from doing that exercise until the pain resolves at which point you can recommence the exercise.

You may also be provided with additional exercises to strengthen your back and legs if your physiotherapist deems this necessary.

PHASE 1 (COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY)



Lying on your back with your knees bent, tighten your stomach muscles and flatten the curve of your back into the bed.

Hold for 5 seconds.



Lying on your back with your fingers just behind your ears and elbows out, tighten your stomach muscles and lift your chin to your chest.

Hold for 5 seconds.