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## POST-OPERATIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY INFORMATION

### Spinal Surgery

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#### SURGERY:

After your surgery you will have a waterproof dressing on your back to cover your wound. This will stay on until you see your surgeon again. Although this may appear minor, the surgery inside your spine is much more traumatic and you must give your body full opportunity to recover.

**YOUR RECOVERY** is greatly dependent on your post-operative routine.

Inside your spine, a variety of surgical procedures can be performed. Your surgeon and your physiotherapist will discuss these details with you. The following information is provided to aid your recovery and protect your spine in the early phase post-surgery.

#### CARE OF YOUR SPINE AFTER SURGERY:

During the first few weeks after your operation, your spine is recovering from the trauma of surgery, and you need to take care not to “over-do-it”. You need to avoid

-Sitting for longer than 15mins, or shorter duration if discomfort occurs

-Bending your spine

-Twisting through the spine

-Lifting and carrying anything heavy

#### LOG ROLL

You will also be shown by your physiotherapist how to Log Roll in and out of bed while in hospital. This will prevent twisting through the spine, and help reduce pain. This process is reversed to get back into bed.

#### SITTING:

You are allowed to sit out of bed for short periods regularly. A taller chair with a high straight back and arm rests is preferable. This helps you to get in and out of the chair easily, and keep your back straight. You are not allowed to sit in a low soft couch for the first few months.

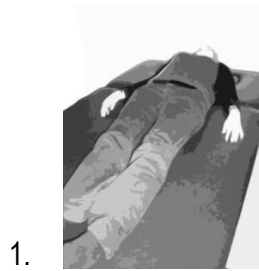
#### WALKING:

You will be required to get out of bed and walk around the room and corridors regularly, starting the day after surgery. When you are walking it is important that you stand up tall and keep your spine upright. Do not twist or bend. There is no limit to the distance that you walk, but it is recommended that you walk as much as possible, doing short walks quite often, rather than one long walk. Be guided by your body and any increasing discomfort. Walking is important to help prevent blood clots, to keep your lungs inflated and clear of sputum, to maintain leg strength, to prevent muscle tightness in the legs, and to keep spinal muscles active.

#### Further Physiotherapy

Once you have seen your surgeon for your post-operative review, he will refer you to a physiotherapist for ongoing rehabilitation. This will involve an exercise program for your deep abdominal (core) muscles which will help to support your spine. Your physiotherapist will also guide you with return to other activities and exercise.

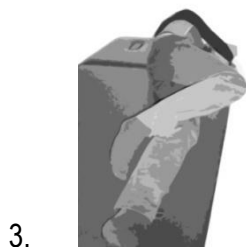
## Log Roll Transfers: How to safely get in and out of bed



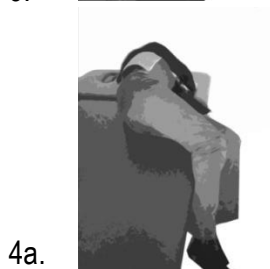
Lying flat on your back



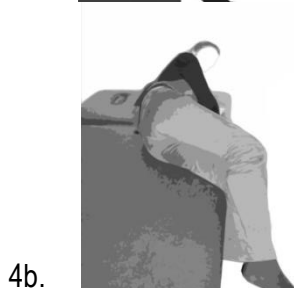
Bend furthest knee, reach furthest arm across body



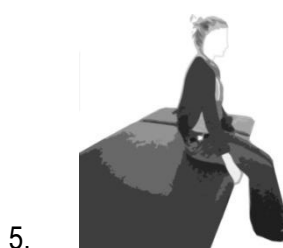
Roll onto your side keeping your spine straight



Drop your legs over the side of the bed



At the same time using your arms to push up



Keeping your spine straight, push up to sitting.

## **EXERCISE PROGRAMME:**

A physiotherapist will help you to commence these exercises while you are in hospital. They will help to maintain good circulation, leg muscle strength and movement, and begin activation of your core abdominal muscles.

With all exercises, **repeat every 2 hours for the first few days**. Short, more frequent exercise sessions early will help prevent you from becoming too sore.

## **EXERCISES**

1. **Foot and ankle movements:** Pump ankles up and down vigorously for 1 minute



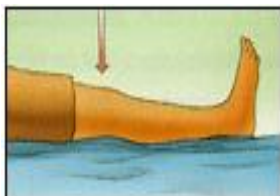
2. **Hip and Knee Flexion**



**Lying in bed** Keeping your heel on the bed, slide it back towards your buttocks, allowing the knee to bend gently. **ENCOURAGE** this movement within the limits of discomfort. Do not force it.

Slide your heel along the bed, bending each knee as far as comfortable. Start with 1 set of 10 reps, and increase number of sets as comfortable up to 3 sets of 10.

3. **Static Quads**



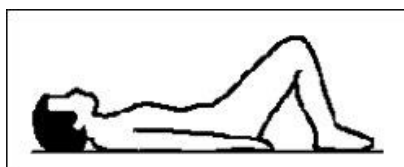
Lying in bed, tighten the muscles on the front of your thigh by squashing your knee into the bed. Hold for 3 seconds. Start with 1 set of 10 reps, and increase number of sets as comfortable up to 3 sets of 10.

4. **Buttock Squeeze**



Clench your buttocks together  
Hold for 3 seconds. Start with 1 set of 10 reps, and increase the number of sets as comfortable up to 3 sets of 10.

5. **Core Muscle Activation**



Lying on your back with your knees bent up, gently draw your lower stomach in towards your spine. Hold for 10 seconds, keep breathing. Repeat 10 times, increase the length of contraction as comfortable.

