



Information for
patients and
carers

Physiotherapy Following Adult Spinal Fusion Surgery

Postoperative Physiotherapy Advice Leaflet

Before your operation

You will receive lots of information and advice about what to expect before and after your operation. You may be referred to physiotherapy before your operation. This is to improve your condition and to help you to make the best possible recovery. It may be useful to refer to this throughout your preoperative and recovery period.

After your operation

1. Protect your spine

It is important to try and limit movement around the part of your spine that has been operated on. It takes approximately three months for the vertebra to begin to fuse, and more than a year before fusion is complete. The part of your spine that has been operated on will now be rigid. Your back may feel stiff. This is normal. In the past you may have been encouraged to do exercises to move your spine regularly to improve stiffness. It is the opposite after your surgery. You must minimise movement of the part of your spine that has been fused, particularly bending and twisting.

2. Look after your posture

It is important to keep a good upright posture as much as possible. This helps to protect your spine, reduce back pain and further spinal problems in the future. After the operation it is normal to have a feeling of muscular aching around your spine and tiredness for several months. You may need to change position regularly and may need to lie down for short periods during the day especially in the first few weeks after the operation.

3. Adapt how you do everyday tasks

You will need to adapt the way you do daily tasks to protect your spine. Sitting down and standing up – You will need to bend at your hips and knees. Try to keep the curve in the bottom of your spine and avoid slumping. This may feel difficult as your hips may also feel stiffer than before the operation. You may develop aching in your hips or knees in

the first few weeks after surgery. This should settle as your joints and muscles adapt.

It is best to avoid low and soft seating.

When reaching down low and up high; keep your back as straight as possible; use the movement in your hips, knees and shoulders and arms. There are video links or a QR code at the end of this leaflet which will show you how to do this in more detail.

4. Exercising and returning to normal activities

For the first 6-12 weeks following your operation you should focus on recovering from the operation and adapting your daily activities and posture to protect your healing spine. There are some gentle functional exercises in video form attached to this leaflet. These will help you to adapt and gently begin strengthening. You should not start any other repetitive or specific exercises until after 12 weeks unless specifically advised by your physiotherapist.

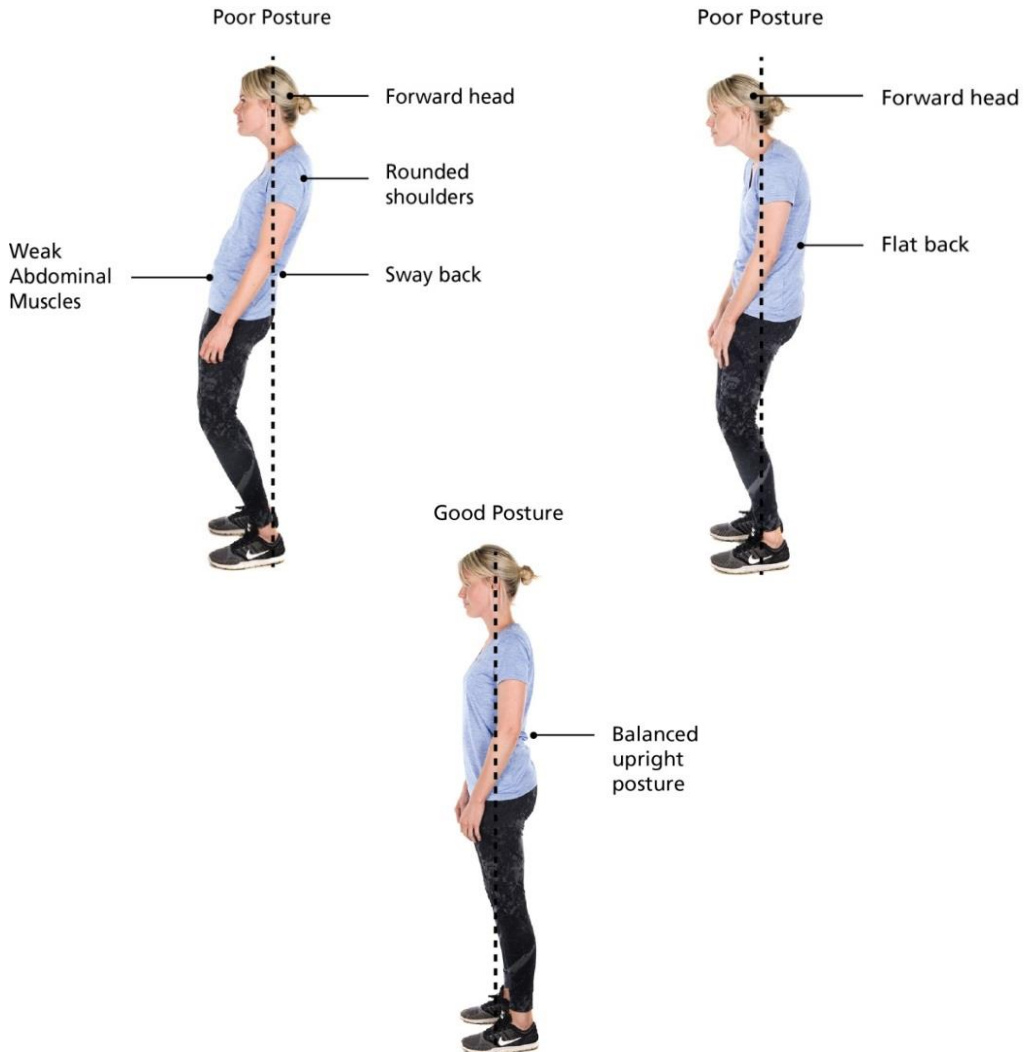
Information regarding return to work, driving and other activities of daily life are detailed in your pre-operative leaflet.

At 12 weeks you will be assessed by your physiotherapist and given appropriate exercises to do. All fusion surgeries are different and your exercises will be individualised for you. You can still be active and exercise following spinal fusion but it is important to protect your spine. Your physiotherapist will show you how to do this safely.

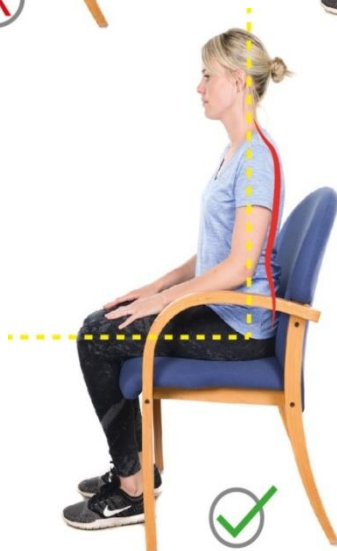
Advice on posture

The following information is a guide only.

It is important to remember to change your position often. This will help to stop your muscles from getting tired and will allow your joints to move.



Advice on sitting posture



Early stage exercises

It is advised that you commence gentle core spinal muscle setting exercises as soon as possible after your operation. Instructions of how to do this are described below. There is a link or QR code at the end of this leaflet demonstrating appropriate exercises. You should not feel any pain or stress on the back whilst doing these. If you are unsure, wait until you have spoken to your physiotherapist.

Core muscle setting exercise

Lie on your back on the bed with your knees bent and your feet in line with your hips. You should not attempt to get on and off the floor.

Relax your stomach. Breathe into your lower ribs and as you breathe out, slowly draw the section of your abdomen situated below your belly button upwards and inwards “away from your belt line”. Breathe normally. You should be able to feel the muscle contracting if you press deeply 2cm in from the bony prominence at the front of your pelvis. Your rib cage should remain relaxed and should not elevate during this process. Your back or pelvis should not move. Maintain this contraction for 10 seconds if you can. Repeat this as many times as you feel comfortable with. Initially this may only be 1 or 2 but could increase to 5-10 times.



Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact the Physiotherapy Department: Chorley District Hospital 01257 245757, Royal Preston Hospital 01772 522876.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/spinal-exercise-videos



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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઇચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

Department: Core Therapies, Physiotherapy

Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support

Production date: October 2020

Review date: October 2023

JR562 v1