

Spinal Surgery Precautions and Activity

Follow your spinal precautions for 12 weeks or until your surgeon tells you it is okay to stop.

No "BLT" or "double P"

No Bending

- ✓ No bending your back forward or backwards.

No Lifting

- ✓ Do not lift anything weighing more than 5-10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs approximately 8.5 pounds.

No Twisting

Following Cervical Surgery

- ✓ Do not twist your neck.
- ✓ Keep your head up straight and keep your ears and shoulders lined up.

Following Lumbar Surgery

- ✓ Do not twist your trunk.
- ✓ Keep your shoulders and hips lined up

Avoid Pushing and Pulling

- ✓ Don't pull yourself out of bed or allow someone else to pull you up.
- ✓ Log roll when getting out of bed.
- ✓ Don't pull up on the handrail when climbing the stairs
- ✓ Avoid reaching.

Activities

Sleeping

- ✓ Log roll to the side to get out of bed
- ✓ Change your position frequently, about every 30-60 minutes.
- ✓ You may sleep on your back or your side. Do not sleep on your stomach. When sleeping on your side, keep a pillow between your legs to keep your spine in neutral alignment.

Walking

- ✓ Walk, walk, walk!!! You should walk at least once per hour while awake.
- ✓ Take short frequent walks every day. Gradually increase your walking distance as tolerated. If you have not been physically active start slow. Start with 10 minutes of walking daily. Add 10 minutes to your walk each week until you are walking /moving for an hour each day.
- ✓ Walk on flat surfaces.

Stairs

- ✓ You may climb stairs. Initially, limit the number of times you climb the stairs per day. Take your time going up and down the stairs. Make sure to place your entire foot on the step carefully

Driving

- ✓ Do not drive for at least 2 weeks. You should not drive while taking pain medication.
- ✓ You may ride in a car, but limit extended travel. If a trip is longer than 30-60 minutes, you should get out frequently to take a small walk and stretch.

Work/Other

- ✓ Do not return to work until you are cleared by your surgeon. The surgeon will determine your readiness.
- ✓ Your surgeon will let you know if you need outpatient PT or OT at your follow up visit.
- ✓ Your surgeon will let you know when you can resume your normal activities at your follow up visit.

Medications/Pain Management

- ✓ **Only take medications for pain/spasms AS NEEDED, and as prescribed. Hold if drowsy.**
- ✓ **Do NOT take your pain medication and muscle relaxer at the same time.** Space them by at least one hour.
- ✓ Continue to use ice packs at home for pain relief.