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Physiotherapy

Patient Information

Exercise programme following surgery of the lumbar spine

Document history

Authors	Neurosciences Physiotherapy Team
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
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Following your operation it is advisable to get out of bed and mobilise as soon as possible.

Sitting is the position that puts the greatest amount of pressure on your back. Initially after surgery you are advised to sit for short periods only (less than 30 minutes) maintaining a good posture. Gradually increase the time you spend sitting as comfort will allow. You may find perching on a surface more comfortable. If you become uncomfortable change your position i.e. stand up, walk, lie down or sit.

You may experience pain in the area of your surgery in the first few days. Ask for pain relief if required. A degree of discomfort and stiffness is normal. However, any activity that produces sharp pain or persistent increase in pins and needles or numbness should be treated with caution.

Avoid heavy lifting for six weeks. When lifting, bend at your knees not your back. Keep the object close to your body, do not twist or strain and ensure you exert the pressure through your legs.

Gradually build up your activity level, continue to increase your walking distance daily. If you have a sudden increase in pain during or after a particular activity, stop and rest before building up to the activity again over the next couple of days. If you experience more pain think back to the previous day's activity. This may help you to identify the cause and suggest how you should manage the activity better by pacing yourself.

Returning to sport should be gradual and graded as your pain allows. If returning to swimming, allow your wound to heal before entering a public pool, and vary the stroke if you feel discomfort.

Pilates classes

Pilates focuses on building your body's core strength and improving your posture through low impact conditioning exercises.

Core muscles are your back, abdominal and pelvic muscles. Pilates strengthens and conditions these muscles to increase agility and support your back.

The best way to get started with pilates is to join a class and learn from a qualified pilates teacher.

Classes are run at local leisure centres and physiotherapy led classes are run across Cambridge.

For further details please ask your ward physiotherapist.

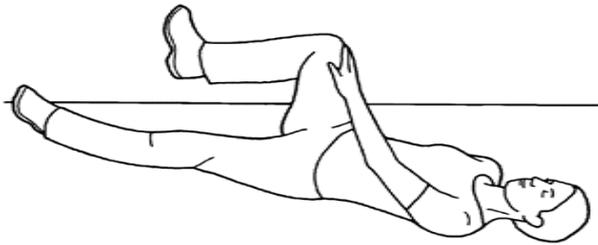
Knee rolling



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Lying on your back with knees together and bent. Slowly roll your knees from side to side 10 times, keeping your upper trunk still. Do this exercise three times a day.

Knee hugging



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Lying on your back, bring your knee towards your chest and hold it there with hands if needed. Repeat with other leg 10 times. Do this exercise three times a day.

Transversus abdominals



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Lie on your back with legs bent and feet together. Pull your stomach up and in by hollowing lower abdominal wall to flatten back gently onto floor. Assist this contraction by pulling up and in with the pelvic floor muscles. You should feel a pulling sensation low in your groin. Do not allow your back to flatten too hard onto the floor or let the stomach bulge forward. Hold and sustain a consistent contraction with minimal effort for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.

How to progress your exercises

Returning to normal activity should ensure your back continues to improve in flexibility and strength.

Core stability exercises can be improved by attending a local pilates class.

If you feel you would benefit from more supervision whilst exercising discuss with your GP about attending an exercise programme, or being referred to a physiotherapist in your area.