

# Back Surgery

**Movement is an essential part of your recovery process after surgery. It helps with reducing your pain and restoring your strength.**

## Movement

- Limit twisting and repetitive bending. Also be aware of your lifting restrictions of 2-5kg until 4 weeks post-surgery, and then 10-15kg for 3 months post-surgery
- Bend your knees and hips to raise and lower yourself while picking up objects
- Alternate positions and move regularly

## Daily Tasks

- Gradually return back to your daily activities & slowly increase what you do each week
- Use a cup of water to rinse your mouth after brushing your teeth instead of stooping over the basin
- Sit while you shave or put on your makeup
- Sit down to put on your pants, skirt or shoes
- Rest your foot on a foot stool or use a shoehorn to help put your shoes on
- Slide heavy pots and pans along the bench
- Sort clothes on a waist high bench
- Use a washing trolley to take wet clothes out to the line

## Driving

- Most patients are generally safe to drive 2 weeks post-surgery, however, if unsure check with your G.P or the clinic nurse

## How do I get out of bed?

You'll use the 'log-rolling' technique, shown in picture below, to get out of bed after surgery.



### Do not drive if:

- You are affected by medication
- You have weakness in the arms or legs that prevents you from safely controlling the steering wheel or pedals
- You are unable to sit comfortably for an extended period of time e.g. 20-30mins

## Walking

- Start with short and frequent structured walks
- Your aim is to accumulate 30 mins of continuous walking post-surgery
- At six weeks, your goal is a thirty-minute walk twice a day
- Timing pain medications – before going for a walk or before completing your exercises
- Discuss return to sports with your Physiotherapist

## Return to work

- Initially you should return to light duties
- For office-based roles, consider returning 2-4 weeks & for manual or labor-intensive jobs discuss with your Physiotherapist



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# Exercises

Your physiotherapist will assess your capacity to complete the below exercises post surgery, in hospital. Once you've been cleared to commence, aim to do all the exercises for 10 repetitions, 3 x day.

## Deep Breathing Exercises



Breathe in through your nose. Hold the breath for 2-3 seconds. Breathe out through your mouth. Aim for 5 deep breaths every hour.

## Glute Squeeze



Squeeze your bum muscles. There should be no leg movement. Aim to do 5 sec holds.

## Ankle Pumps



While lying on your back, moving your feet up and down.

1. Pump ankles up.
2. Pump ankles down.

## Sit to stands



Bend forward from the hips (back is straight), moving your shoulders over your knees and stand up.

## Thigh Squeeze



Push the back of your knee into a rolled up towel by squeezing your thigh muscles. Aim to do 5 sec holds.

## Seated Heel Raises



Sit with your feet flat on the floor. Lift your heels up off the ground & then relax your heels back to the ground in a controlled manner.

## Heel Slides



While lying on your back, sliding one foot at a time towards your bottom.

1. Set the abdominal muscles by drawing your navel in toward your back bone.
2. Slide one heel.

## Seated Marching



Lift one knee off the chair, then relax it back down. Repeat the opposite leg.

### Seated Knee Extension



Straighten your knee as much as you can. Relax your knee back to the start position.

### Mini Squats



Hold onto support surface. Slowly bend your hips and knees as if you are going to sit on a chair. Squat - Head up - Butt out - Knees back. Straighten up and repeat.

### Heel Raises



Stand whilst holding on to support surface. Lift your heels off the ground.

### Standing knee bends



Use a chair for support. Hold onto support surface. Bend one knee at a time.

### Marching on the spot



While standing and holding onto something, lift your knees no higher than your waist.

### Side leg raises



Stand with good posture. Hold onto support surface. Lift one leg out to side - do not lean with trunk. Repeat opposite leg.

## Contact

Please call NeuroSpine Institute on 1800 638 767 and ask for a Physiotherapist if you have any questions or concerns regarding this handout or anything physiotherapy-related.