

SCOLIOSIS SURGERY

PHYSIOTHERAPY ADVICE



Scoliosis surgery aims to straighten your spine and prevent worsening of your scoliosis.

Metal rods are attached to either side of your spine to stabilise your back and allow you to move freely immediately after surgery. Your vertebral bones will fuse over time. A back brace is usually not needed after surgery.



GENERAL ADVICE

It is normal to experience back pain at the wound site, which will improve over time and should not prevent you from moving normally.

You will feel stiffness in your back and may experience pain around your shoulder blades as it takes time for your muscles to adjust to their new position after surgery. Pain medication and regular movement will help relieve your symptoms.

When you first start to walk, you may feel dizzy and nauseous. This is normal, as you have had an anaesthetic, are taking pain medication and are spending long periods of time lying down. These symptoms will significantly improve within a few days. Regular movement will often help you feel better, and will support your recovery.

Aim to increase your activity level each day after surgery, and eliminate bed rest by two to three weeks.

Once home, treatment for your back from community providers is not necessary unless specifically requested by your surgeon.

GETTING IN AND OUT OF BED

It is safe to reposition yourself in bed immediately after surgery, including lifting your bottom to move sideways or turning over to lie on your side. Change position regularly to avoid increasing pain due to stiffness. Use pillows to get comfortable, try a pillow under your knees when you are on your back and between your knees when lying on your side.

It is best to get in and out of bed by rolling onto your side.

Getting out of bed:

1. Bend your knees and roll onto your side
2. Lower your legs over the side of the bed
3. Push down with your hand and lift your shoulders off the bed
4. Sit up



Getting into bed:

1. Sit down
2. Lower your shoulders to the bed and lie on your side
3. Lift your bent legs onto the bed
4. Stay lying on your side or roll onto your back

SITTING

Staff will advise when it is safe for you to begin sitting in a chair. The right chair is the one that feels most comfortable, which is likely to be one with reasonably firm seating, upright support and arm rests that encourage good posture. Aim to build up to 30 to 60 minutes of sitting in a chair. This will help you to sit up for meal times and prepare for the car trip home.

WALKING

Walking is the most important part of your recovery. Walk regularly to get the best possible outcome from your back surgery.

Expect to get dressed and start walking the day after surgery, unless otherwise advised by staff. Continue with short frequent walks whilst in hospital. Staff will help you until you have been advised it is safe to walk on your own.

Try to walk as normally as possible using trunk movement, arm swing and an upright posture. Aim to walk for an hour a day within four to six weeks of surgery, divided into at least two or three 20 to 30 minute walks. Continue this activity for three months or more.

You should feel confident to manage stairs before you go home. Push through your legs and use a hand rail for balance if you need. Avoid pulling your body up with your arms. Practice stairs with your physiotherapist before discharge.

LIFTING

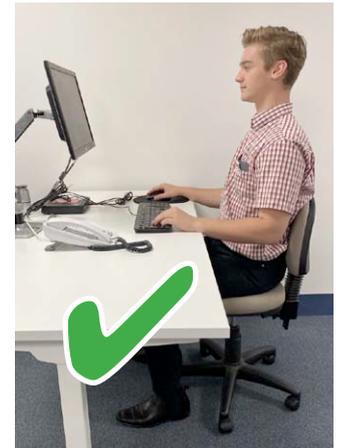
Avoid heavy lifting for three months. Only lift objects that you feel confident managing without any difficulty. When lifting, it is essential to maintain a straight back and use your legs rather than your back to bend, turn and do the work, not your back.

Talk to your surgeon before carrying your school bag.

RETURN TO SCHOOL

You can return to school when your surgeon is happy and you feel ready. Before going back to school, make sure you can sit comfortably and walk well enough to manage a school day. Half days are often a good way to ease back into school.

When you are at school, managing your posture and sitting time effectively is important to avoid discomfort. Regular positional change and activity is recommended.



The **BEST** way to sit is:

- B:** Bottom to the back of the seat
- E:** Elbows remain under your shoulders (chair should be close to the table)
- S:** Skull resting on an imaginary head rest
- T:** Time – get up and move every half an hour

CAR TRAVEL

You can travel in a car immediately after surgery, including going home. If travelling long distances, consider stopping regularly for short walks and using pillows for extra comfort.

RETURN TO SPORT

For the first three months, walking is the mainstay of your daily exercise program. Other forms of low impact sport such as swimming and stationary bike are possible after three months if your surgeon permits. Competitive sports, such as basketball and netball, are usually achievable within six to 12 months.

COMPLICATIONS

Complications following scoliosis surgery are uncommon but do occasionally occur. Please contact your surgeon's rooms or GP at home if you experience fever, increased swelling and redness around the wound, or increased pain that does not settle with your pain medication routine.