# POST-OPERATIVE LUMBAR DISCECTOMY, LAMINECTOMY PROTOCOL

## Week 0 to 6:

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<th>Patient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Surgery Date</td>
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<td>Surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
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<td>Date at 6 weeks</td>
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## Information about your surgery

- One or more of the above procedures has been performed on your spine to relieve your symptoms.
- Post-operatively, you may still experience some of your pre-operative symptoms.
- This may take some time to settle while the tissue heals and the nerves recover.
- It is important that you give the operated area time to heal and you should therefore adhere to the guidelines in this information pack.
- It is also important that you optimise the function of the rest of the spine and the rehabilitation that is done with your physiotherapist will help with this.

## Brace / Corset

- You may be supplied with a brace by the orthotist when you come into hospital.
- The brace may be used for the first 6 weeks post-operatively.
- It is not necessary to sleep with it or wear it if you are relaxing at home.

## Moving in and out of bed

- Roll sideways bending one knee to get in and out of bed.

## Sitting

- You may start to sit within the first 2 to 3 days after your surgery.
- Let pain be your guide as to when and how long you sit.
- Your physiotherapist will show you correct sitting posture.

## Bathing, showering, going to the toilet

- To avoid excessive stretch on the healing nervous system, you are advised not to sit in the bath for at least 2 weeks.
- You should shower or wash in a standing position.
- You should not bend to wash your lefts, you will have to lift your feet up one at a time.
- Use non-slip mats in the shower to avoid accidents.

## Bending, lifting, carrying

- Try to avoid bending and twisting for 6 weeks.
- To pick up an object you must bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- ‘Stabilise’ before lifting up.
- You may need to hold onto something for support.
- Hold the object close to you and don’t lift anything too heavy.

**Driving and car travel**
- You should not drive a car for at least the first 2 to 4 weeks.
- If you have to travel in a car, you should be in the front passenger seat with the seat tilted back.
- Your physiotherapist will show you how to get in and out of the car before you leave the hospital.

**Stretches and Exercises:**

### Week 0 to 6:

1. **Neural stretch (side-lying):**
   - Lie on your side with the knee bent and slightly backwards.
   - Straighten the knee in this position.
   - Move your foot up and down 10 times while keeping the knee straight.
   - Bend the knee again, move it slightly forward, and straighten the knee in the new position.
   - Move foot up and down 10 times.
   - Repeat with the other leg.

2. **Glute maximum stretch:**
   - Figure 4 position.
   - Hug your knee toward your chest.
   - Slowly angle it toward opposite shoulder.
   - Repeat with other leg.
   - Hold each side for 30 seconds.
   - Repeat 3 times.

3. **Piriformis stretch:**
   - Bend one leg up and cross the foot over the knee of the straight leg.
   - Pull the knee towards the opposite shoulder.
   - Repeat with other leg.
   - Hold each side for 30 seconds.
   - Repeat 3 times.

4. **Stabilising with alternate leg straightening.**
   - Repeat 10 times with each leg.

5. **Stabilising with controlled leg fallout.**
   - Repeat 10 times with each leg.

6. **Bridging:**
   - Stabilise NB!
   - Hold each bridge for 5 seconds.
   - Repeat 10 times.

7. **Clam exercise:**
   - Lie on side with knees and hips bent to 45° (stabilise).
   - Keep feet together, lift knee up and out.
   - Repeat 10 times with each leg.

8. **Lumbar rotation:**
   - Stabilise.
   - Squeeze a ball or rolled up towel between your knees.
   - Slowly roll knees over to one side and then the other.
   - Only let your knees go as far as what you can control.
   - Roll continues each side.

9. **Curl up:**
   - Stabilise as you squeeze a ball or rolled up towel between your knees.
   - Roll up to lift only your head and shoulders.
   - **NB:** Tummy must not bulge outwards.
   - Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 8 times.

10. **Headlights up and down in 4-point (with neural mobilisation from head):**
    - Kneel with knees below hips and hands under shoulders.
    - Stabilise and get spine into a relaxed neutral position.
    - Slowly drop head down and up again – you will feel a pulling sensation at operation site … this applies a gentle stretch to neural tissue.
- Rotate pelvis upwards (‘headlights up’) and downwards (‘headlights down’).
- Initiate movement at the coccyx, not the mid-spine.
- Move head and pelvis separately.
- Repeat each 10 times.

11. Side flexion stretch (discectomies only):
   - Stand with back to wall, feet shoulder width apart and arms at sides.
   - Slide one hand down leg.
   - Come up slowly, repeat on other side.
   - Repeat 8 times to each side.

12. Lumbar extension (discectomies only and then only if prescribed by your physiotherapist):
   - Life on tummy and gently push up one elbows.
   - No feeling of discomfort and belly button is always on the bed.
   - Hold for 10 seconds, repeat 5 times.

*All exercises to be done 3 times daily.*

Please consult with your physiotherapist at 6 weeks to progress your exercises.

Good luck with your rehabilitation!