



ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES OF MEADVILLE, P.C.

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POST-OP DISC INSTRUCTIONS

You have recently undergone a lumbar procedure and just had your stitches removed. At this time you are still within the "healing period" of soft tissue recovery of the spinal area. It has been suggested that it takes approximately six weeks post surgery to attain satisfactory soft tissue healing to permit vigorous rehabilitation. Over this remaining month or so, plan to increase your physical activity over what it was immediately post operatively; although do not proceed with aggressive strengthening.

One aspect to work on is range of motion or flexibility of the lumbar spine. At least once a day, if not twice, you are requested to work on forward flexion (bending forward) and extension (bending backward) exercises. These should be in repetitions of five to seven and should be done following a pre warm-up of your back, either through a heating pad or hot shower or bath. Also I request that you lie down and perform knee-chest position to stretch out the low back, buttock and upper thigh areas. *Knee-chest exercises may also be done in a seated position.*

Aerobic conditioning is crucial at this point in time to prevent loss of physical stamina. It is recommended that regular cardiovascular exercise be instituted. The simplest form of this is walking. I recommend that you progress to walking 20-30 minutes on a minimum every other day, if not daily. This can be done outdoors or indoors on a treadmill if you have one available. Alternatives to walking are cycling, exercise bike or swimming. You should initially underestimate your walking capability. Start for short time periods and build up. There will be some residual fatigue from surgery and an adjustment period, so it is suggested you start off at 5-10 minutes and build from there. Initially we want you to build endurance, walking to 30 minutes, and then you can work on your speed.

As far as household activities, you are now permitted to participate in light household chores, such as dishes, straightening up, etc. You are not to run a vacuum cleaner or sweeper. You are not to work outside or shovel or dig dirt. It is recommended that you try and lift no more than 10-20 pounds. It is recommended that you follow proper body mechanics in any lifting you do. You should avoid being bent forward at the waist to pick something up and twisting. That puts maximum stress on the disc and lumbar area and risks reinjury.

Driving is now permitted. Short to medium distances are recommended. By medium, it is implied driving to Erie. It is recommended that you drive with a lumbar roll or support at the small of your back. If you have to drive longer distances, ie-Cleveland, Pittsburgh or farther, it is recommended that every 45 minutes you stop, take a break and walk and stretch to prevent increased stiffness plaguing you when you arrive at your destination.

(Continued on reverse side)

Total Joint Replacement, Spine Surgery, Arthroscopic Surgery, Hand Surgery, Foot Surgery, Sports Medicine

LAWSON C. SMART, M.D. • CURTIS H. LAUB, M.D. • JAMES R. MACIELAK, M.D. • PHILIP A. FRNDAK, D.O. • VINCENT J. PACZKOSKIE, JR., M.D.

Body positioning - Sitting is known to put significant stress on the discs and should, even at this stage, be limited to 30-45 minutes at one time before getting up and moving about.

In reference to medication, it is recommended you utilize over-the-counter meds; aspirin, Tylenol and Advil for low-level pain, if you are experiencing more significant pain, narcotic analgesics will be prescribed; however, on a diminishing dose as time towards healing progresses. It is not unusual to experience some increase in low back pain or stiffness as the healing period progresses. It is also not unusual to have occasional "electric shocks" traveling down your affected leg as a residual from the surgery. Both the back pain and leg symptoms, however, should be short-lived and not of significant magnitude. If they are persistent and are significant, you are instructed to contact the office for further instructions.