

# Lumbar discectomy / nerve root decompression



**Information for patients**

Therapy Services



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





## The first two weeks following surgery

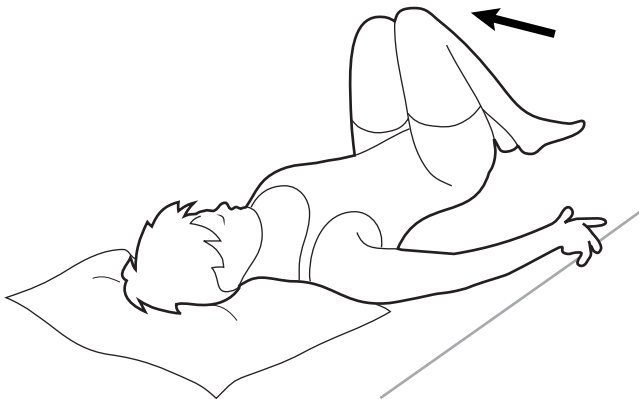
You have had surgery to relieve the pressure on a nerve in your lower back.

It is normal to experience some discomfort in your leg and back for a short time following surgery. It is important to carry out the exercises to increase your general mobility and to reduce the risk of scar tissue sticking the nerve down again and causing leg pain

If you have any questions please ask the physiotherapist.

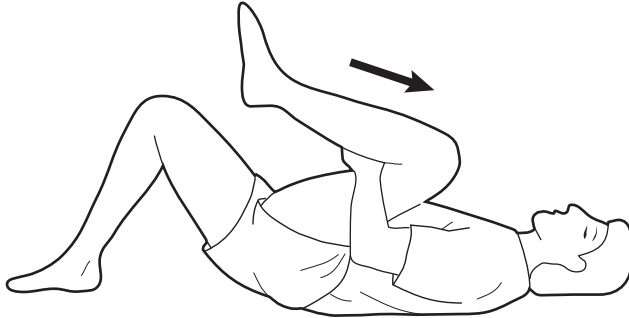
## Exercises for you to do at home following surgery

1.
  - lying on your back with your knees bent
  - slowly roll your knees from side to side keeping your upper trunk still
  - repeat 25 times or continue for one minute



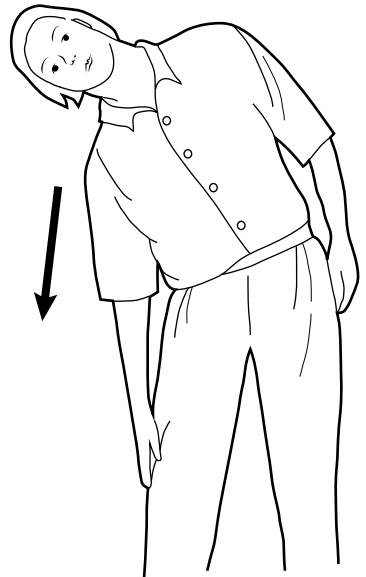
2.

- lying with your knees bent and your feet on the floor
- lift one knee towards your chest. Place your hands behind the knee and draw it into your chest, then lower your leg back to the bed / floor. Repeat with your other leg
- repeat 15 times or for 30 seconds each leg



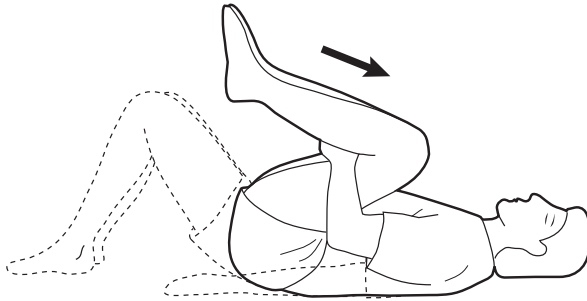
3. Standing:

- bend sideways at the waist
- repeat 10 times each side

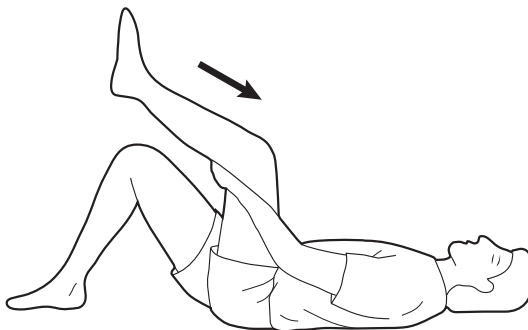


## Progression of exercises two weeks after surgery

- 4.
- lying with your knees bent and feet on the floor, lift your knees towards your chest
  - place your hands behind both knees and draw them towards your chest then lower your legs to the bed / floor
  - repeat 20 times or for one minute



- 5.
- lying with your knees bent and your feet on the floor
  - lift one knee towards your chest. Place your hands behind the knee and slowly straighten the knee until you feel a mild tension at the back of your leg. Bend and straighten the knee slowly. Repeat with your other leg
  - repeat 10 times each leg



## **Build up your walking distance daily and walk little and often**

**The following advice should be followed for the first 6 weeks to allow your back to heal.**

### **Do ...**

- Home exercises at least 3 times daily
- Gradually increase your exercise tolerance. Start with a short walk daily and increase the distance slowly
- Alternate postures and positions frequently
- Sit for short periods initially. Gradually increase the time as long as you feel comfortable
- Get out of bed using the log roll technique as shown by the physiotherapist
- Stop exercises if leg pain increases afterwards. Begin gradually when the pain has passed

### **Don't ...**

- Sit on low chairs or deep couches
- Sit up in bed for reading
- Sit in the bottom of the bath; use a shower whenever possible
- Lift, push or pull heavy or awkward loads
- Drive for 3 - 4 weeks unless otherwise instructed by your consultant and start with short trips only. Check with your insurance company if notification is required
- Don't push through severe pain - go to limit of stretch

## **When will I be able to return to work?**

If comfortable, you can return to a desk / seating occupation at 3 - 4 weeks following surgery. If physical, after 6 - 8 weeks following the first outpatient appointment with the consultant. If in doubt ask the consultant or physiotherapist.

## **Outpatient appointment**

You may have a physiotherapy outpatient appointment arranged after surgery to check your progress and to discuss any concerns you may have.

## **What should I do if I have any concerns or questions?**

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your back following surgery please contact:

The Physiotherapy Department

**0114 271 5988** - Northern General Hospital

**0114 271 3090** - Royal Hallamshire Hospital

and ask to speak to a member of the spinal team.



To help support your local hospitals visit  
[sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk](https://sheffieldhospitalscharity.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1165782



**Alternative formats can be available on request.  
Please email: [sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net](mailto:sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net)**

**© Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust 2019**

Re-use of all or any part of this document is governed by copyright and the "Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005" SI 2005 No. 1515. Information on re-use can be obtained from the Information Governance Department, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. Email [sth.infogov@nhs.net](mailto:sth.infogov@nhs.net)