

**NOTES**

**Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time—

Physical Therapy  
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**Back Care  
After Surgery**

*To help you as you recover*

Your doctors suggest that you exercise regularly as part of your recovery. You should talk to your doctor about the details of your exercise program. This booklet tells you what you should or shouldn't do while recovering after surgery. It also shows a basic exercise program and how to increase your activities safely.



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***Know what to expect after surgery. And, make plans ahead of time, if you can, to prepare for your return home.***

### **Add or Keep Exercise in Your Lifestyle**

People who get regular exercise are less likely to suffer from recurrent back problems.

#### **Exercise Can also Help You to:**

- Decrease your back pain
- Increase your endurance
- Maintain mobility and muscle tone
- Control your blood pressure
- Lose weight
- Reduce boredom

### **Expectations After Surgery**

#### **Day 1**

- Eat all meals out of bed in chair and start exercise as tolerated

#### **Day 2**

- Walk in hallway 3 times a day
- Get in and out of flat bed
- Family training as needed
- Use toilet by yourself

#### **Day 3**

- Take shower by yourself
- Walk full loop around Nurse unit or 400 feet without device if you didn't use one before
- Walk up and down stairs as needed for home

### **Call Your Doctor if:**

- Your incision becomes red, swollen, tender, “squishy” or begins to drain.
- You have a fever of 101° F or higher.
- You have extreme nausea or vomiting.
- You are not able to take your medicine for any reason.

Be sure to ask your doctor on your 2 or 6 week return visit about starting physical therapy as an outpatient.

**Heel Raises**

1. Stand with feet 12 inches apart.
2. Raise up slowly onto your toes as high as you can.
3. Hold 5 seconds.
4. Do 10 repetitions 2 times per day.

**Wall Slide**

1. Assume a partial squatting position, holding onto a chair for balance.
2. Stand up straight.
3. Do 10 repetitions 2 times per day.

Begin walking for about 6 to 7 minutes, or the distance you walked in the hospital. Increase the amount of time that you walk by a minute or two each day. Start on flat ground.

**Slowly work up to walking at least 30 minutes 3 to 5 times a week.**

**Be Careful After Surgery**

Request ice from your nurse to assist with pain control every other hour as needed.

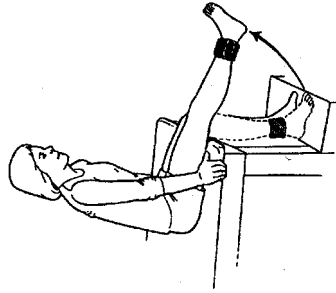
**Body Mechanics and Precautions After Spinal Surgery**

1. Vary your sitting and standing posture often, using a stool or adjusting your seat, keeping your back straight.
2. Kneel rather than maintaining a bent-over or squatting position for a long time.
3. **Do not twist.**
4. Organize your home and/or work environment to allow for free and safe movement to prevent tripping or slipping. For example, remove throw rugs or put a non-skid surface in the tub.
5. Don't lift more than 10 pounds until cleared by your doctor.
6. **Get clearance from your doctor before driving, resuming sports, and returning to work.**
7. Ask for assistance when needed.
8. When getting out of bed, log roll – do not twist.
9. Avoid straining while using the bathroom. Drink plenty of water, eat fiber and keep moving!
10. Avoid bending forward too much by lifting foot onto opposite knee to put on sock and/or shoes.
11. Ask therapist for techniques to get dressed/undressed if pain restricts functional activities.

### Personal Exercise Program UWMC

Your home exercise program will include these exercises along with walking. Later, your doctor or physical therapist will suggest other exercises and activities.

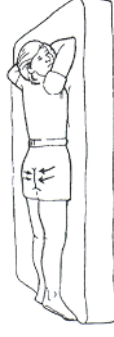
#### Knee Extension



1. Sit on the edge of a bed or table.
2. Straighten knee fully and hold 1 second and slowly lower.
3. Repeat 10 times 2 times a day.

#### Glut Sets

1. Lie on back or stomach as comfortable.
2. Tighten buttocks together.
3. Hold 5 seconds, slowly relax.
4. Repeat 10 times 2 times a day.



#### Quad Sets

1. Sit or lie on your back with your leg straight.
2. Press the back of your knee downward.
3. This will tighten the muscle on top of your thigh and move your kneecap as shown.
4. Hold 5 seconds.
5. Repeat 10 times 2 times a day.

