

Walking Guidelines After Spine Surgery

Purpose

A simple walking program can help improve mood, pain, circulation and cardiovascular endurance.

1. Keep a daily record.

- A simple chart should include:
 - Date
 - Distance
 - Amount of time of continuous walking
- Fill in this chart each time you walk.
- Add any symptoms or comments that would be useful to note.

2. Walking should be continuous and rhythmic.

Swing your arms and stride along at an even rhythmic pace. Try not to stop unless necessary. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Use any walking aid that you may have been prescribed by your therapist, such as a cane or walker, until you are able to comfortably and safely walk without.

3. If you develop any of the following symptoms during or after your walk, slow down or stop the exercise. If your symptoms continue, contact your physician.

- Increased pain
- Excessive fatigue
- Any unusual joint, muscle or ligament problems
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Irregularity of the pulse
- Headache
- Significant or severe shortness of breath

4. Do not walk immediately after meals – wait at least 1½ to 2 hours.

5. Do not exercise during the heat of the day during the summer.

Heat and humidity will increase your heart rate.

6. In the winter, walk inside a mall or at midday.

Avoid icy or snowy conditions.

Once you can walk around your house and in the community safely:

- Start out walking 5 minutes a few times per day as able.
- Progress your walking by a few minutes each session as you can tolerate.
- Complete your walking program by progressing to 30 minutes per day.

Other tips

- Walk up and down your driveway and progress to around your block in good weather.
- Have a cell phone with you if available.
- Walk with a friend when possible.

Continued

