Recovery After a Spine Fracture



Spine fractures can take up to three months to heal. Pain and physical activity tolerance should get better over time.
Consult your doctor if you have persisting, severe pain or problems with functioning.

1-4 weeks



Avoid prolonged bed rest, sitting, or braces. Use other strategies to manage pain.

4-12 weeks



Gradually resume physical activities. Avoid lifting or heavy exertion for 12 weeks.

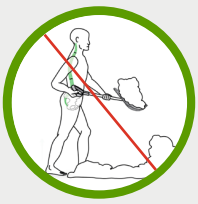
12 weeks+



Start or resume exercises for back extensor muscles, physical functioning, and balance.

Strategies to Manage Pain







- Avoid long periods of sitting: get up and move around every 30 minutes. Gradually increase your physical activity.
- Place a pillow under your knees when sleeping on your back, or between knees for side sleepers.
  - » Is it painful to get in and out of bed? Try a recliner during the first few weeks after fracture.
- Spend 15-20 minutes in the unloading position: lie on your back, feet flat on floor or firm bed, knees bent, lay arms out to side, palms facing upwards. Use a small pillow to support your head and neck if needed, or pillow under the knees.
- Avoid challenging physical activities or lifting for 12 weeks after your fracture, e.g., carrying groceries, lifting pets or children, vacuuming or yard work.
- Consult an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, or exercise physiologist to learn how to modify daily activities.
- Consult an exercise physiologist or physiotherapist for an exercise program once the fracture has healed.
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about medications for pain.
- Apply cold or heat.

After a spine fracture, the risk of having another fracture is very high. Talk to your health-care provider about medications and other strategies to prevent future fractures.

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