

Lumbar Fusion REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Phase I: Protection Phase/Immediate Motion (0 – 12 Weeks post-op)

0-12 Weeks post-op:

- No outpatient PT or the first 12 weeks unless otherwise specified by physician
- Gradual return to ADL's at home with Home Health PT
- Will see MD at 3 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months post op

12-14 Weeks post-op:

- Recumbent bike no resistance: avoid excessive lumbar flexion or extension
- Manage pain and swelling/modalities prn
- Monitor scar and tissue mobilization
- Begin neural glides/mobilizations. Do not reproduce symptoms
- Light resistance upper/lower extremity exercises: 0-5 lbs.
 - Lumbopelvic stabilization in neutral spine
 - Focus on addressing baseline weakness (i.e footdrop)
 - Posture training
- Home program review/posture education
- Avoid excessive lumbar flexion and extension
- Okay to start PROM or stretching
- Initiate neutral spine core stability training on treatment table: hook lying TA training, diaphragmatic breathing, lumbar multifidi training, etc.
- Soft tissue mobility prn
- Increase activity tolerance

Phase II: Intermediate Phase (14 -18 Weeks post-op)

14-16 Weeks post-op:

- Continue recumbent bike, may progress to upright bike
- Manage pain and swelling, modalities prn
- Progress UE/LE strengthening: increase strength and activity tolerance
- Continue neutral spine core stability training on mat. Okay to initiate sitting and standing neutral spine stability training.
- Continue soft tissue mobility
- May begin grade I-II joint mobilizations on spinal segments. **No** joint mobilizations within 2 segments adjacent to fusion.



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16-18 Weeks post-op:

- ❑ Continue upright bike, may progress to elliptical, treadmill walking
- ❑ Progress UE/LE strengthening
- ❑ Initiate saggital plane core stability training. Gradually progress flexion/extension.
- ❑ Continue soft tissue mobility, modalities, as needed
- ❑ Continue joint mobilizations on spinal segments. **No** joint mobilizations within 2 segments adjacent to fusion

Phase III: Advanced Strengthening Phase (18 - 24 Weeks post-op)

18-22 Weeks post-op:

- ❑ Continue cardio equipment as tolerated
- ❑ Introduce core training in transverse and frontal planes progressing to multi planar
- ❑ Un-restricted upper/lower body strengthening.

22-24 Weeks post-op:

- ❑ Continue with all ROM, flexibility, stretching, and strengthening exercises
- ❑ Initiate plyometric program

24-26 Weeks post-op:

- ❑ Continue with all ROM, flexibility, stretching, strengthening and plyometric exercises
- ❑ Progress slowly to straight line jogging
- ❑ Initiate interval sport program if applicable after consultation with physician

Phase IV: Return to Activity Phase (26 - 36 weeks post-op)

- ❑ Continue with established strength and flexibility programs
- ❑ Continue to comply to interval sport program with gradual return to recreation/sport
- ❑ Criteria for return to play:
 - Satisfactory ROM, Strength, and Clinical Exam
 - Satisfactory completion of interval sport program
 - Physician approval



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