Lumbar Fusion Protocol
Dr. Bodemer 03/2016

Precautions

- No Lifting >10-15 pounds
- Cleared to drive when no longer taking pain medications and as patient tolerates
- Motion restrictions—no trunk flexion, extension, rotation or side bending

**DOS:**

**Immediately Post-Op**

- Follow precautions from hospital:
  - Wear brace as needed for comfort
  - Log roll in and out of bed
  - Use toilet extender
  - Limit sitting to 15 minutes—Reclined
  - Do not bend past 70 degrees at hip joint
  - Limit lifting to 5-15 pounds
- Follow exercises given at hospital
- walk as much as tolerated

**Three to Four Weeks Post-Op  Begin Date:**

- May begin light pool exercises:
  - Forward walking
  - Backward walking if patient is able to stabilize spine
  - Stabilization exercises
  - Tread water
  - Aqua jogging/bicycling
  - Progress walking as much as tolerated

**Six Weeks Post-Op  Begin Date:**

- At this point the protocol will parallel the laminectomy protocol starting with week three
- May start weaning from brace at this time
- May initiate gym program once per week
- Hamstring stretching
- Very gentle single/double knee to chest
- Training in appropriate body mechanics for functional activities
- May start prone position to stretch hip flexors and core stabilization exercises
- Treadmill

- Patient may benefit from pool, upper cycle and stairmaster to increase cardiovascular fitness without increased back pain
- Gradually add side bending and rotation when they can stabilize
- Gentle stabilization exercises and cardiovascular. No aggressive strengthening yet.

**Eight Weeks Post-Op  Begin Date:**

- Gym twice a week—wean out of pool
- Twenty pound weight lifting restriction
- Progress strengthening and core stabilization intensity as tolerated
- Patient should be able to be weaned from brace at this time without complications

**Twelve to Sixteen Weeks Post-Op  Begin Date:**

- Progress strengthening with side bending and rotation
- Swimming is okay for patient is able to stabilize and has no pain
- Patient should be doing well. The 12-16 week period is time for maximizing strength.
- Upper level strengthening and conditioning program

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