

Trauma and Orthopaedics

A Guide to Wearing a Spinal Brace

You have been instructed to wear a semi-rigid spinal brace to protect the stability of your spine (back). It is extremely important you continue to wear the brace for the period of time specified by your Doctor.

The brace you are wearing is called a TLSO (Thoraco-lumbo-sacral Orthosis) (*figure 1*).



Figure 1

Braces of this type do not completely immobilise your spine. Whilst it is possible to bend and twist within the brace, it is not advisable to try. It is important, however, to attempt to maintain an upright posture at all times. The brace's main functions are to minimise movement and encourage an upright posture.

If worn correctly, all markings / writing will be 'the right way up'.

If the brace feels like it is riding upwards or rubbing, it is likely that you are not maintaining an upright posture.

If you are lying completely flat it is acceptable not to use the brace. Therefore it is not necessary to wear it when you are sleeping. In any other position, the brace must be worn (sitting, standing or walking).

Putting on and removing the brace takes practise, but soon you will be able to manage this independently. The following instructions will help you remember how to do it.

To put on the brace

1. Move from lying to sitting on the edge of the bed via a side-lying position (your physiotherapist will show you how to do this whilst on the ward). Sit upright, perching on the edge of the bed.
2. Put your arm into the brace (as if you are putting on a rucksack) (*figure 2*).



Figure 2

3. Position the foam pads just below your collar bones and the upright metal bar centrally.

4. Fasten the waist strap securely (*figure 3*).



Figure 3

5. Clip in the right hand clip (located just in front of your collar bone) (*figure 4*).



Figure 4

6. Pull both cords outwards to tighten the belt (much like a corset) (*figure 5*) and secure using the Velcro (*figure 6*).



Figure 5



Figure 6

It is important that females position the abdominal panel (located at the front of the brace below the metal bar) underneath the bust to maximise stability and minimise the risk of the brace riding upwards causing discomfort.

To remove the brace

1. Sit in an upright position on the edge of your bed.
2. Loosen the cords and secure to the belt.
3. Unclip the right hand clip.
4. Unfasten the belt.
5. Slip your arm out of the brace as if you are taking off a rucksack.
6. Lie down onto your back via the side-lying position shown to you by your physiotherapist.

Washing/hygiene

It is acceptable to wear a thin T-shirt or vest top underneath the brace. We would advise nothing thicker however.

During your time in the brace you are encouraged to wash at the sink in a seated position. It is not advisable to remove the brace to have a bath or shower due to the risk of further damage to your back if you were to slip or move suddenly.

If you have any questions or concerns whilst wearing the spinal brace, you can contact the physiotherapist on:

Durbin ward: 01392 403691

Aftercare: 01392 403509

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