Back supports

The following companies produce lumbar rolls, back supports and preformed pillows etc.
However a rolled up towel in a stocking is equally effective and costs nothing!
You can also purchase electric pads and microgel packs, by Mail Order or from Boots Chemist.

The Back shop	14 Cavendish Street, London, W1H 7LJ. 0171 9359120
Chester Care	Sidings Road, Lowmoor Rd Ind. Est. Kirby in Ashfield, Notts. NG17 1J2 01623 757955
Innovations	Innovations (mail order) Euroway Business Park Swindon SN38 1NN 0990 807060

For useful "How To" Leaflets contact :-

The National Back Pain Society
16 Elmtree Road, Teddington
Middlesex. TW11 8ST
Telephone 0181 9775474
Or ring the Health Information Helpline
Telephone 0800 665544

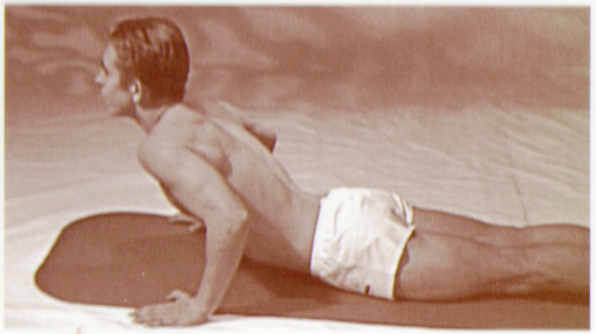
BACK TO LIFE

PROMOTING RECOVERY AFTER BACK SURGERY

BACK TO LIFE

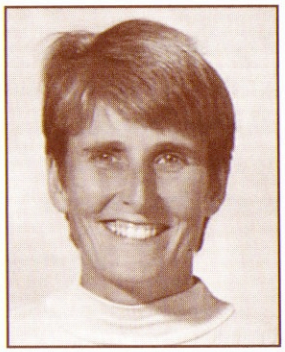
Julie Sparrow
Physiotherapist
tells you how,
"you can make it
back to a full and
active life."

"So don't delay
start today."



Information Pack

The Back to Life Information Pack has been prepared by former back surgery patients, Jane and Graham in conjunction with Julie Sparrow, a Physiotherapist specialising in back care. The program of activity also has the full support of your Consultant so you may use it with confidence.



We recommend you watch the video and study the material with your relatives and friends so that you have all the understanding support you need. What's more, watching the video often will keep up your morale!

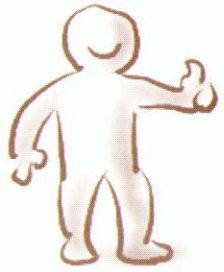
The accompanying notes will develop and expand the material on the video and provide information on local facilities and support services. PLEASE read them so that you have all the information you need to get back to a full, active life.

Patient's Name ----------

Address ----------

Telephone No ----------

Hospital Consultant ----------



Helpline

The Helpline has been set up for specific problem solving and directive help. If you are worried about your progress or uncertain what to do next do not hesitate to ring. Please only use it for this purpose.

Your Helpline number is

When you ring you will be connected to an answerphone in the Physiotherapy Department

AT ---

ASK for the BACK TO LIFE HELPLINE
then
GIVE your NAME and TELEPHONE NUMBER - including code -
AND the NAME of your HOSPITAL CONSULTANT.

Please do NOT leave a message at this stage. A physiotherapist familiar with your notes will call back within one working day.

Write down all your queries so that you do not forget anything when you receive the return call. Do not feel uncomfortable about asking questions until you are sure you understand what to do next.

Support Services

However supportive your friends and relatives may be, it is not unusual for pressure to build up at home. Your partner or carer may be bewildered by the slowness of your recovery and gradually friends visit you less frequently. You are a whole person and will make much better progress if you are happy and relaxed so it is important to build up a network of support. Do not wait for loneliness or pressure to escalate before asking for help. Take action yourself. Consider contacting your Hospital Chaplain - they will understand how you are feeling and may be able to put you in touch with someone living nearby.

Your HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN is

Tel. ---

" Network of Support "

SUPPORT SERVICES

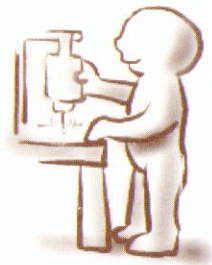
STRESS

For stress within your marriage or partnership we recommend.

MARRIAGE CARE
National Helpline. 0345 - 573921
Lines are open Monday and Thursday
3 pm - 9 pm.

RELATE MARRIAGE GUIDANCE
You will find details of local services in your yellow pages directory.

Make sure anyone you approach is professionally trained.



If you are feeling depressed or confused, talk to your Doctor first and ask for his advice. It is not unusual to feel angry or depressed when coping with pain. This should pass as you extend your activities and get back to every day life.

Pain Control

Arthritic changes - that is wear and tear of the spine - soft tissue changes and scar tissue pressing on the nerves, can all cause pain. First of all don't panic!

The exercise program is designed to help alleviate these problems and restore the natural balance in your back, so get started right away. Don't wait for the pain to go away on its own, it won't.

To begin with you may feel you are making matters worse. Your muscles will probably complain as you begin to use them. This is normal so try to relax, as tension will increase the level of pain. You will need to experiment to discover what is right for you. A hot bath or shower, a good book or your favourite music can all work wonders.

No one can see your pain! But the pain is real and needs dealing with so do not feel uncomfortable about asking for help. Talk to your doctor - s/he can prescribe medication that will help to break the cycle of pain.

Sleeping

It is important for you to have enough sleep and rest. However if you can't sleep don't try! Get up and walk around for a bit - make yourself a warm drink, listen to music or the radio - the sound of a human voice is very soothing. Heat can help by improving muscle relaxation or if your back is very inflamed try an ice pack (or a bag of frozen peas!). The important thing is to relax as much as you possibly can.

Routine

Be disciplined - plan your day - and stick to it! Get up and dress at the same time everyday, wearing comfortable clothes and trainers or shoes with good support and shock absorbing soles. Ensure you allow plenty of time for your exercises and walking. Intersperse activity with short periods of rest either standing or lying, especially when you first come home.

Keep a Diary

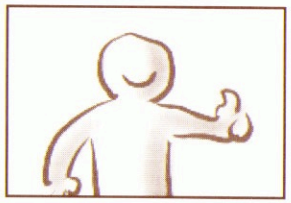
Use this to find the right pace for you. It is important to avoid lurching from one extreme to another, doing too much one day and nothing the next.
Write down everything, it will help you to limit high risk activities, and discover which activities trigger too strong a reaction.

How much is too much?

This will depend on how active you were before surgery, so be realistic - build up gradually and don't give up. Each full day in bed could delay your recovery by another week so keep active and develop absorbing past times that fill your days without placing undue stress on your back.

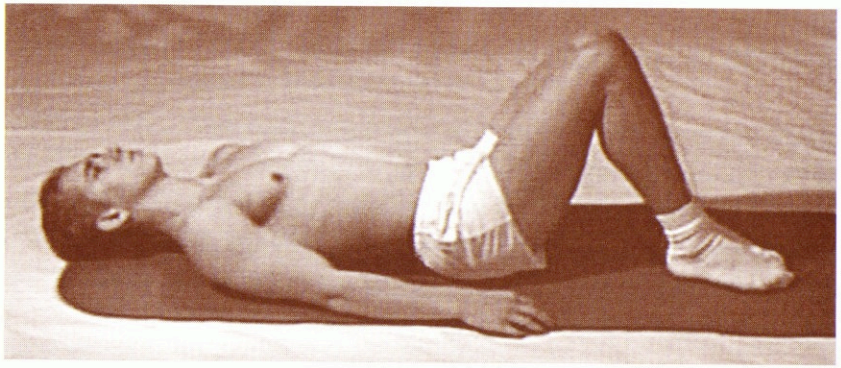
Risk Taking

Don't! Learn to say no! Think and plan before you start. Find new and creative ways to tackle normal life. You can do most things if you think and plan first. Limit new activities to short bursts and build up gradually. Don't be too proud to ask for help!

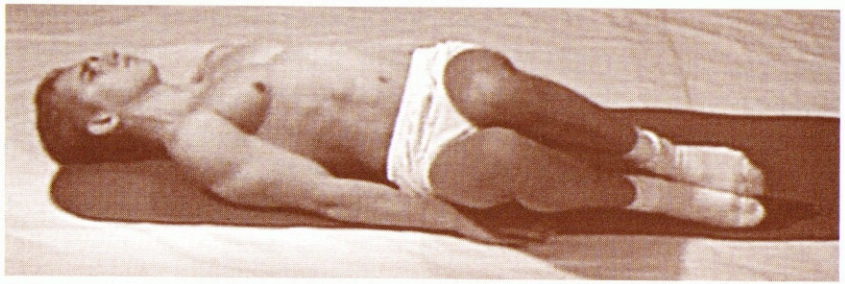


Exercises

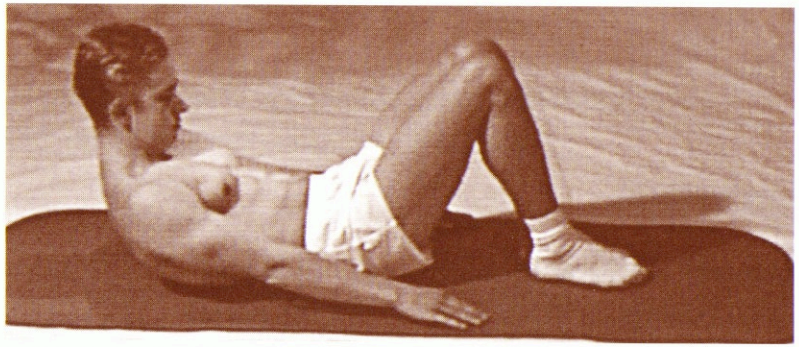
For reference purposes use these pictures to jog your memory while exercising.



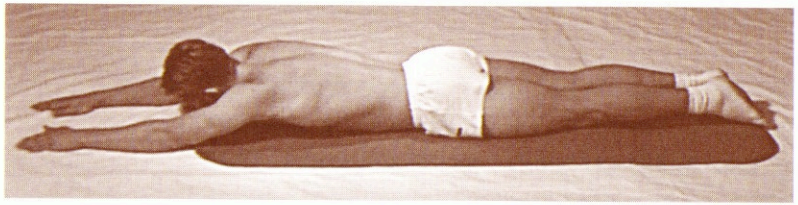
EXERCISE NO 1



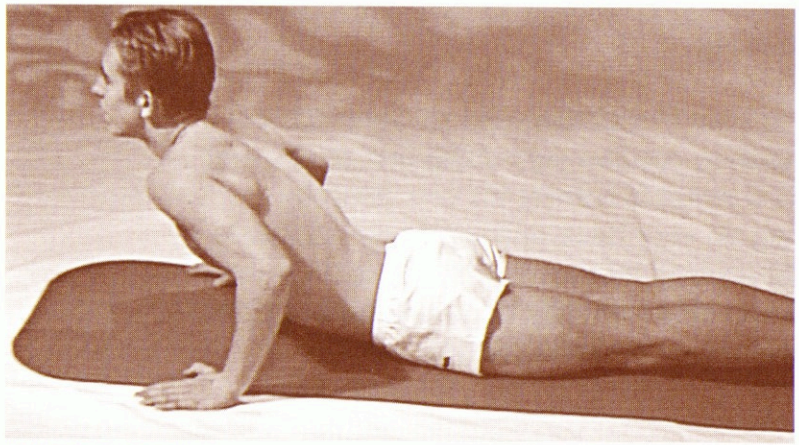
EXERCISE NO 2



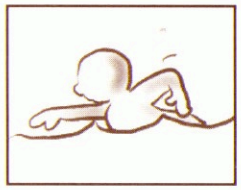
EXERCISE NO 3



EXERCISE NO 4



EXERCISE NO 5



Activity in water

If you swam regularly before surgery or would like to do exercises in water then this section is for you.

Exercises

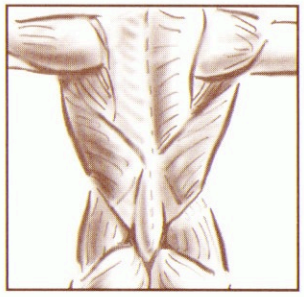
As you are less likely to feel discomfort while exercising in water it is very important to start gently and build up gradually. For information on activities in water contact your local Leisure centre.

Swimming

Talk to your Physiotherapist or Consultant if you wish to resume swimming and check that this is a suitable activity for you. Start by floating on your back and gradually introduce a gentle sculling motion. Build on this until you are swimming normally but avoid breast stroke, particularly in the initial stages.

Your Notes

This is for you to fill in additional information that refers just to you and your personal program of activity.



Diary of a Back

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
8am	Exercise in bed	Bad Night !	Better Night
8.30	Up & Dressed	Exercises	Much Happier
9.00	Short Walk	Breakfast	Take it steady !
9.30	Potter	Short Walk	Tried Standing
10.00	Rest	Feeling Cross	Exercises
10.30	Sit 10 mins	Feel like giving up!	I will do it !
11.00	Coffee with friend		

Buy a lined exercise book and set out day and time so that you can write down everything. It will help you monitor your activities.