

# Post-Operative Instructions after Spinal Cord Stimulator Surgery

Most patients feel that the incisional pain is almost completely gone by 4 weeks, but they must remember that the incision is not even 30% healed at 4 weeks. Any strenuous activities prior to complete healing of the incision may result in permanent back pain that will never resolve.

## First two weeks

The goal of the first two weeks is to recover from the surgery. Please limit activities. The fact that the incision does not hurt does not mean that the incision is healed.

1. There are no bed rest requirements. Do what you would do normally. Alternate your activities. Sit on the couch, a recliner, and chairs, go for short walks or rest in bed. Do not do any one activity for a prolonged period of time. Sitting in a car for more than 30 minutes may be uncomfortable after surgery; most patients tolerate longer car rides at one month. Driving is allowed only if it has been more than 24 hours after your last dose of pain medications or muscle relaxant.
2. Do not **walk** more than the length of a long hallway.
  - Week 1: walk no more than the distance of one city block
  - Week 2: walk no more than the distance of two city blocks
3. **Exercise:** Not permitted.
4. No heavy lifting over 10 pounds. Do not pick up small children or small animals. Do not use lawn mowers or vacuum cleaners and do not do laundry.
5. **Hygiene:**
  - Days 1-5: Sponge bath only
  - Days 6-14: Shower, but keep the incision dry.
6. **Dressing:** Keep the incision covered for at least 3-5 days. Most patients prefer to keep a dry dressing over the incision to avoid irritating the incision with clothing. You may change the dressing once a day.
7. No sexual intercourse.

## Weeks 2 - 6

1. Some activity may be incorporated into your daily routine. There are still very strict limitations on activity.
2. Exercise:
  - You may use a stationary cycle.
  - Aquatic therapy or swimming is permitted.
  - Walking longer distances is permitted; however, if your surgical incision is sore after walking too far, you must cut back on the distance.
  - No jogging, no treadmills, no weight lifting, no aerobics.