

## Neurosurgeons

**Dr Francis Tomlinson**  
MBBS, MD, PhD, FRACS  
NEUROSURGEON & SPINAL SURGEON

**Dr Terry Coyne**  
MBBS, FRACS  
NEUROSURGEON & SPINAL SURGEON

**Dr Richard Kahler**  
MBBS, FRACS  
NEUROSURGEON & SPINAL SURGEON

**Dr David Walker**  
BMedSc, MBBS, PhD, FRACS  
NEUROSURGEON & SPINAL SURGEON

**Dr Michael Bryant**  
MBBS, FRACS  
NEUROSURGEON & SPINAL SURGEON

**Ph: 07 3833 2500**  
Fax: 07 3833 2511  
Web: [www.brizbrain.com.au](http://www.brizbrain.com.au)  
Email: [info@brizbrain.com.au](mailto:info@brizbrain.com.au)

**All correspondence to:**  
BrizBrain & Spine  
The Wesley Hospital  
Evan Thomson Building  
Level 10, 24 Chasely Street  
Auchenflower Qld 4066

Allied Health Partner of



Proud Supporter of



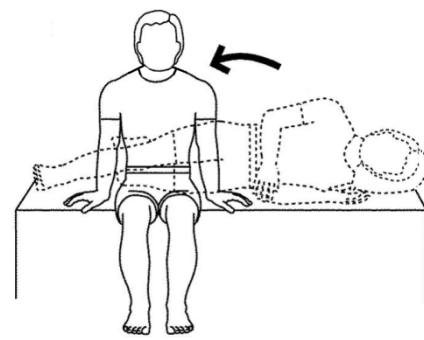
This handout briefly outlines the activities and exercises expected of you immediately following your lumbar fusion operation. Continue with these exercises until you are reviewed by your surgeon or physiotherapist after your operation – they will provide further advice and instruction regarding your continued rehabilitation.

The most painful site for recovery following an anterior fusion is generally the abdominal incision and if used, the incision site of the bone graft. It is important that you maintain adequate pain relief and follow these instructions to minimize your discomfort.

### Getting Out Of Bed

A physiotherapist will see you the day after your operation to assist you to get out of bed and walk for the first time. They will guide you through the following process:

- Fold up a towel and hold firmly over your stomach – this provides support to the incision and helps minimize movement and therefore decrease pain.
- Brace your lower tummy gently.
- Lying on your back, bend your knees, and roll onto your side.
- Push up with your arms as you lower your legs over the side of the bed and sit yourself up.
- Always move as one unit and avoid twisting the shoulders or hip.
- You may feel dizzy or faint at this point so take some deep breaths and move your ankles and toes.
- When you are ready, stand up by pushing yourself off the bed.
- At first, you may require a walking aid, and some assistance due to the drips and drains that are attached to you. Walk as normally as possible. Try to straighten up as best you can.



*It is good to take short frequent walks in the corridor. Remember to let your therapist know if walking increases your back pain or leg pain.*

*Aim to sit out of bed for short periods only (20 minutes maximum). Use only a firm hard-back supportive chair.*

*Avoid tasks involving lifting, straining, pulling, pushing, twisting or stooping. If you must stoop, try to bend your hips and knees, rather than your back, as you bend forward and straighten back up.*

# Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion

## Deep Breathing Exercises

Commence these immediately after surgery and repeat every hour.

Breathing exercises are important in maintaining good lung expansion and preventing chest infections after an anaesthetic.

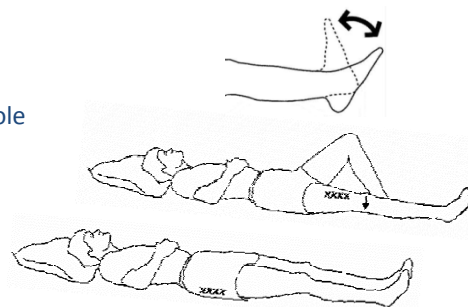
- Use a folded up towel or similar to hold firmly over your stomach. This helps brace your stomach and will help minimize any discomfort you may get doing these exercises.
- Take a slow deep breath through your nose, try to fill your lungs completely, hold for a couple of seconds.
- Repeat a further 3 times.
- When you breathe in, keep your upper chest relaxed as you expand your ribs and abdomen. This will give you a sensation of breathing around your waist.
- You may need to cough to clear any secretions.

## Bed and Circulatory Exercises

Commence these immediately after surgery

Due to the anaesthetic and because you are not moving around as often as you would normally, you may be at risk of developing a clot in your legs. To help prevent this from occurring you should do the following exercises:

1. Move your ankles up and down (use your whole foot not just your toes).  
*Aim to do this 20 times every hour.*
2. Straighten your knees and tighten your thigh muscles. Make sure that your whole leg is resting on the bed. Do this 5 times on each leg holding for 5 seconds  
*Aim to do this 3-4 times per day.*
3. Squeeze your buttocks together 10 times, holding for 5 seconds. Make sure that your legs are resting on the bed.  
*Aim to do this 3-4 times per day.*



## Mobility Exercises

Commence these on day 1 post surgery and repeat at least 2 times per day. These exercises should not increase your back or leg pain.

### 1. Hip bend

Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet resting on the bed. Grasp behind your thigh and use your hands to gently assist one knee up to 90 degrees (bending at the hip). Lower the leg back down.  
*Hold 5 seconds, repeat 5-10 times with each leg*



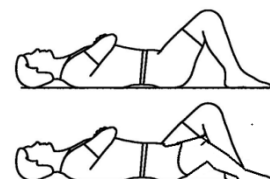
### 2. Hamstring and Neural mobility

Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet resting on the bed. Bend one knee up and clasp behind the thigh with your hands. Keeping your foot relaxed, gently lift your lower leg up and down (do not fully straighten your knee while doing this). You may feel a stretch at the back of your leg but stop if you feel an increase in pain.  
*Repeat 5-10 times with each leg (DO NOT HOLD AT END OF RANGE).*



### 3. Hip movement

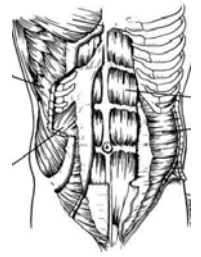
Lie on your back with your knees bent up and feet resting on the bed/floor. Slowly lower one knee out sideways, making sure that your spine and pelvis remain still. Return to the start position.  
*Repeat 5-10 times with each leg.*



# Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion

## Deep (Transverse) Abdominal Muscle

This muscle forms the inner layer of your stomach muscles. It is located underneath your rectus abdominus (six-pack) and obliques. It has a corset like action about your low abdomen and across your lumbar spine. This muscle should switch on at low loads and stay on for longer periods of activity despite the task. It is very important that when you activate this muscle, your normal relaxed breathing pattern is not affected.



## Exercises for the Deep (Transverse) Abdominal Muscle

Commence these on day 1 post surgery and repeat at least 2 times per day.

- Lie on your back (crook lying) or lie on your side.
- Prepare by breathing in and out in a relaxed way.
- Stop breathing briefly at the end on the out breath.
- Gently and slowly draw up your **pelvic floor**.
- You should feel a sense of work both in the pelvic floor and the abdominal muscles below your navel.
- Hold this muscle tension as you **start breathing normally again**. Do not hold your breath.

## Information for Discharge:

- Wound care – try to keep your wound clean and dry. You should not take baths, go in a swimming pool or immerse your incision in water in any way until permitted by your doctor. If you notice excessive redness or swelling around your wound, notify your doctor.
- Pain Management – your surgeon will provide you with adequate pain relief. It is important to talk with your doctor if you feel that the medication is not giving you sufficient relief.
- Continue the exercises in this brochure.
- Try not to overdo things. Remember that it is normal to feel tired and a bit sore in your back. Listen to your body.
- Undertake regular posture changes between lying, sitting, standing, walking. Try to avoid sitting for more than 20 minutes at a time. When you do sit, sit in an upright supportive chair rather than the lounge or propped up in bed.
- Brace your low tummy gently for position changes.
- Commence a walking program. Start with a 5 minute walk. Gradually increase your walking within your tolerance. As a guide, by about two weeks after your operation you should be aiming to walk 20-30mins per day.
- Avoid heavy or strenuous tasks involving lifting, straining, pulling, pushing, twisting or stooping.
- Seek advice from a physiotherapist about 2 weeks after your operation. They will help you progress your exercises and rehabilitation.
- Your surgeon will see you in the clinic approximately 4 weeks after your operation. BrizBrain & Spine administrative staff will contact you regarding this appointment. If you have not heard from them after 2 weeks call 3833 2500 to enquire.

## Clinic Locations

- **The Wesley Hospital.** Evan Thomson Building, Level 10, Chasely Street, Auchenflower Qld 4066
- **St Andrew's Medical Suites.** Suite 3, Level 7, 457 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill Qld 4000
- **Fortus Medical Suites.** Suite 2, 832 Gympie Road, Chermside Qld 4032
- **United Medical Suites.** Shop 2B, Hilltop Shopping Centre, 71 Astley Parade, North Lakes QLD 4509
- **St Vincents Medical Centre.** Scott Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350
- **The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital.** Medical Centre, Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim Qld 4556
- **Mater Private Rockhampton.** Ward Street, Rockhampton Qld 4700
- **Tweed Day Surgery.** Suite 5, Level 1. 38 – 44 Boyd Street, Tweed Heads NSW 2485
- **St Vincents Hospital.** Suite 2, Level 1, 20 Dalley Street, Lismore NSW 2480