



GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Toileting

1. Use abdominal bracing and bend at your hips and knees to get up and down.
2. Keep your back straight.
3. Using a raised toilet seat may initially be helpful until you are strong enough to get up and down unassisted.

Bathroom Sink Activities

1. Find your neutral position and brace with your abdominal muscles.
2. Bend your knees.
3. You may use a straight-back bend (ie, bend at the hips) if you can do this perfectly so you “don’t bend your back”.
4. For support, you may place your hands on the sink to brace yourself or lean on your elbows, if necessary.
5. You may also prop on foot up on the ledge under the sink or on a stool.
6. When brushing your teeth, using a cup to spit into may be initially useful, instead of bending your back.

Showering

1. Maintain abdominal bracing throughout.
2. Use a long-handled scrub brush or sponge to reach your feet and back.
3. Stand directly under the water to wash or rinse your hair. Don’t bend into the spray.
4. You might find soap on a rope to be helpful or you may tie soap in an old nylon stocking to keep it from dropping.



5. Keep the shampoo and soap within easy reach. A shower caddy eliminates the need to bend.
6. If you do bend, make sure you bend at your knees and you're his, and "don't bend your back."
7. Continue to shower until you are strong enough and able to maintain your neutral, balanced position while getting in and out of the tub.

Dressing

1. Wear loose-fitting clothes.
2. To get dressed, support your back by leaning against a wall or lie down on your back. While lying, you may put on underwear, slacks and socks.
3. If necessary, use reacher to pull the pants over your feet.
4. Put shirts or blouses on while standing.
5. Women may find it helpful to fasten bras in front and then slide around the back.
6. Slip-on shoes may be easier to wear for the time being.
7. If you get dressed seated, make sure that you are able to maintain your neutral position and keep your back straight. Remember, "don't bend your back."

Kitchen Duties

1. Keep lightweight items in the refrigerator at chest height and stand close to reach them or you may bend at your knees and shift your weight forward to do this. If items are below your reach, squat or kneel with a straight back.
2. Keep dishes and utensils needed to prepare food at counter level where you can easily reach them.
3. At first, you may find that preparing lightweight microwave meals is easier.
4. When carrying any pans and/or food items, hold them close to your body. Kneel or sit with a straight back to access utensils below your reach.



5. Maintain abdominal bracing as you perform all activities. Keep your back stabilized in its neutral position.
6. If you must bend, make sure that you use your knees and hips and brace yourself by placing your hand on the counter. If you must load or unload the dishwasher make sure to keep your stomach muscles braced, your knees bent, and your back straight.

Housework

1. Limit housework initially after surgery. After a few weeks, you may preform household activities if you are strong, well trained, can maintain neutral positioning, and “don’t bend your back”.
2. If you find that you are unable to maintain good body mechanics, make sure that you get the help you need from a family member or a friend until you feel comfortable doing these things yourself.