

Service:
Bristol Centre for Enablement

A guide to your spinal orthosis



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Spinal Orthosis

You have been provided with a spinal orthosis which has been designed to meet your individual needs. These are otherwise known as back supports or back braces.

Spinal orthoses are provided to compensate for muscle weakness, paralysis or skeletal problems which cause spinal instability by aiming to:

- Control joint instability
- Prevent excessive joint motion
- Improve joint alignment
- Reduce joint pain

Spinal orthoses can be complex devices so their designs vary to suit each individual.

There are three main types:

1. Rigid devices with plastic or metal sections or supports.
2. Fabric devices.
3. A combination of rigid and fabric sections.

Spinal supports use abdominal compression to stabilise and protect the spine therefore need to be a secure fit. As a result, your spinal orthosis may be uncomfortable to wear in the initial stages.

Important

If your spinal orthosis has been supplied to you as a direct result of a recent spinal injury then you should have been given an indication of HOW LONG FOR and WHEN you should wear the brace. This information should be given to you by a doctor or physiotherapist. Please make sure that you are aware of this information.

However, if your spinal orthosis has been supplied for any other reason then you should gradually increase the wear time with your device. This allows your skin to adjust to the supportive pressures which the device applies. Begin by using your spinal orthosis in a safe, indoor environment.



If your spinal orthosis becomes uncomfortable or painful then seek advice from the Orthotics department.

Skin care

It is advised to wear a layer of clothing between your skin and the device. A single layer of thin cotton clothing is recommended as this will help to wick away moisture from your skin. This will help to keep the skin and the device hygienic and minimize heat build-up.

Unless you have been instructed by a doctor NOT to remove the device you should **check your skin for any signs of marking or redness each time you remove it**. If red marks persist for longer than 30mins or if the skin breaks down or blisters, discontinue use of the spinal orthosis and seek a review with your Orthotist.

It is particularly important to check your skin daily if you have reduced sensation.

There is always a risk of pressure and rubbing when wearing a spinal orthosis.

Each time you use your device, check the straps and connections for wear and tear. **Do not attempt repairs yourself**. Contact the Orthotics department for review.

Straps and padding will wear with use. You can arrange repairs with the Orthotics department.

Caring for your device

You can clean your spinal orthosis with a damp cloth and dry with a towel. Do not dry over sources of heat as this may deform the plastic.

Check the device material regularly for any cracks or signs of wear and tear.

Putting on your spinal orthosis

Unless you have been recommended NOT to remove the device it is generally possible to put your spinal orthosis on when standing, sitting or lying down. However, you will probably find it easier to position and fasten the device when lying down. This will allow you to use both hands to fasten the straps and other fastenings. Ensure all straps on your spinal orthosis are fastened securely.

Review

Following fitting of your spinal orthosis your Orthotist may schedule a review appointment to discuss your progress, check for wear and tear and carry out any necessary adjustments.

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

Your Orthotist is:

If you have any queries or require a review,
please contact the Orthotics department at:



**Bristol Centre for Enablement
Highwood Pavilions
Jupiter Road
Patchway
BS34 5BW**



0300 300 0110



orthotics@nbt.nhs.uk



www.nbt.nhs.uk/orthotics

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading
this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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