



# Thoracolumbosacral Orthosis (TLSO)

A **Thoracolumbosacral Orthosis (TLSO)** is a rigid brace for the mid to lower spine. It is used to limit the motion of the spine after a fracture when, despite surgery (or in place of surgery), spinal stability has not been fully achieved. For example, some types of spinal fractures can be managed without surgery. The brace allows the fracture to safely heal with less risk of further injury.

Your doctor may also suggest a TLSO after a complex spinal surgery, especially fusion procedures. Whether you will need a TLSO after surgery depends on the severity of any instability, lack of good bone quality, location of the surgery, and the nature of your deformity.

Most patients must wear a TLSO for about 3 months after a fracture or surgery.

## How to Wear the TLSO

Put on the TLSO how you were shown in the hospital. You may need help to do this safely and it may be easier to put it on while sitting. Use a cane or crutches if you need extra support until your balance, flexibility, and strength get better.

The TLSO should fit as tight as possible. There should be no gaps between the TLSO and your body. If the brace is too loose, it won't give adequate support and the grooves will not anchor the TLSO to the hip, causing it to "ride up." If this happens, lower the TLSO into its proper position and tighten.

Keep in mind that the brace will limit your ability to move in certain directions:

- You will be able to sit in your TLSO, but you will not be able to bend forward past a right angle.
- You will be able to sit at a 90-degree angle.
- You will not be able to slouch forward.



While wearing the TLSO:

- Do not drive or lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until cleared by your doctor.
- Do not sit for longer than 30 minutes at a time. Get up and change positions frequently.
- You can walk for exercise and you can walk up and down stairs.
- Avoid sitting on low, deep couches. A chair with arms, a firm seat, and an upright back is best.
- Keep your hands free by using a fanny pack, apron, or pockets to carry your belongings.
- Avoid excessive or repetitive bending, twisting, pushing, or pulling.
- Do not smoke. Smoking and nicotine can delay bone and wound healing.

Do not sleep or shower in the TLSO. Take your time when first getting up. Sit on the edge of the bed, take a few deep breaths, and don't stand until any dizziness passes.

## General Care Tips

Be sure to check your skin each day for any red or irritated spots. Your caregiver may need to help you. Some reddening of the skin is common, but if there are any open areas of skin or blistering, cover the area with a bandage for extra protection. You should also:

- Wear a t-shirt under the brace to protect your skin, absorb sweat, and keep the brace cleaner longer.
- Wash your skin with mild soap and warm water daily. Do not use lotion on your skin under the brace.
- Use a cloth and rubbing alcohol to wipe down the hard plastic outer shell or the fabric of your brace each day. Make sure the brace is completely dry before reapplying it.

**Any Questions or Concerns? Please don't hesitate to call the office at (317) 396-1300 or toll free at (888) 225-5464.**

