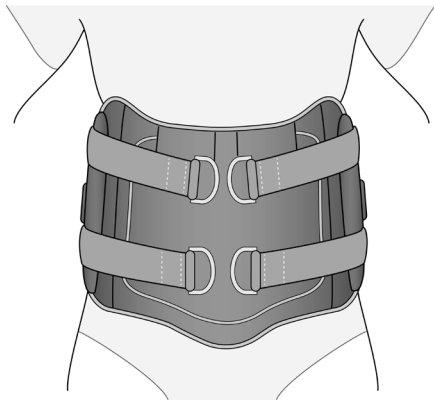


## Using Your Lumbar-Sacral Orthosis (LSO) at Home

### Purpose

Your lumbar-sacral orthosis (LSO) brace helps control and support your spinal posture, helps reduce pain, prevents further injury and promotes healing. It will remind you to keep your back upright and straight. It is often prescribed for the treatment of compression fractures or fractures on the front side of the spine, or after spinal surgery.



### Wearing Your LSO

The brace will keep you from bending forward. It should be uncomfortable when you begin moving into positions you should avoid. You should be able to do many normal activities by yourself or with a little help from caregivers or special tools. Ask your doctor or occupational therapist (OT) for detailed guidelines.

### Getting Ready for Your Trip Home

Arrange for someone to drive you home. Bend at your hips and knees, but not your back when getting into and out of a car, sitting, or standing. To relieve pressure from the front pads when sitting, try leaning back over a firm pillow, towel, or blanket behind the back pad of your brace or sit in a reclining chair.

### Putting on the LSO

1. Loosen the straps in the front of the brace, if they are not loosened. They should have been loosened when you last took the brace off, so you can normally ignore this step.
2. Position the brace so that the back is centered on your spine and so that the lumbar curve of the back insert matches the curve of your spine. This just means to place the back of the brace in its natural, and most comfortable, position on your back. **If there are tags then they should be facing up toward your head.**
3. Fasten the right-side strap panel. Hold the front of the brace in your left hand and the right strap panel in your right hand. Press the Velcro hook of the strap panel onto the Velcro loop of the front brace panel.
4. Tighten the straps. Bring the opposite straps together at the same time. If you have a brace with only one strap per side (a "low-profile" front), you just do this once. If you have two straps per side (a standard front), pull one set snug but not tight, then tighten the second set, then return to the first set and tighten it.
5. Make sure the back of the brace is centered on your spine. The front black pocket should be centered as well. Make the curve of the small of your back is "spooned" by the brace's back polymer insert. Tags or front and back pieces should be at the top edge of brace.

## **Taking off the LSO**

1. Loosen the straps in the front of the brace. Place the Velcro hook onto the side strap but not on the front fabric part.
2. Unfasten the right strap panel. Hold the front of the brace in your left hand and the right strap panel's loop in your right hand. Pull the Velcro hook of the strap panel from the Velcro loop of the front brace panel.
3. Lay the brace down in a safe place. Make sure the Velcro hook of the brace straps does not touch the knit fabrics, which it could damage.

## **Wear a Soft Under-Sleeve**

We suggest you wear a cotton t-shirt under the brace. There is nothing wrong with wearing the brace right on the skin except that you will have to wash the brace much more often. It's better to throw a t-shirt in the wash daily and keep the brace clean for as long as you can.

## **Tip**

If you are having trouble putting the brace on, lay the brace flat on the bed with the inside facing up. Lie down on top of it in the correct position.

## **Caution**

After you take the brace off, always make sure that the Velcro hook is covered so it doesn't damage delicates or knit fabrics.

Fasten the black Velcro hook to the black Velcro loop. Do not fasten the black Velcro hook to the blue fabric. This Velcro fabric is not designed to fasten to the hook over and over.

## **Care**

Remove the black polymer (plastic) inserts from the pockets. Hand wash with mild soap and cool water. Dry flat between bath towels.

Before you remove the polymer inserts from their pockets, mark them so you can return them exactly as they were. Putting them back in-side out or up-side down will destroy the careful fit your orthotist has created.

If you do not remember how the polymer inserts were, look for the label. Each polymer insert has a small label placed in the inside (toward the body), centered near the top end.

If an insert has lost its label, here are some tips:

- The front insert is flat on top and curved on the bottom.
- The back insert is wider at the base and narrower at the top.
- Match the curves with the shape of the body.
- Each lateral insert's curve is in the upper half and toward the body.

## **Daily Activities**

Your LSO will make it hard to bend over and make you top-heavy. Avoid bending over to reach your feet or the floor. Bend at the knees and hips, not the waist. You may need help or special tools to dress, pick things up from the floor, or wipe after going to the bathroom. An occupational therapist can provide tools and teach you new ways to do things while wearing your brace. Be careful on stairs and use handrails.

**How long do I need to wear the LSO?**

Your doctor will decide how long you need to wear your LSO. Follow your doctor's advice even if you feel better and would like to stop wearing it sooner. Your doctor will be checking your progress and will decide what is in your best long-term interest.

**Things to Remember**

Do not expect to be able to move in all directions or sit in all types of chairs. The brace is designed to limit certain motions and positions.

You should inspect your skin under the brace daily to check for any breakdown. If you notice areas of breakdown or redness, please call the orthotics clinic to have the brace adjusted.

**When to Call**

- If the LSO needs adjusting after you leave the hospital call the Orthotics Clinic.
- If you have more numbness, tingling, pain, loss of bowel or bladder function or are less able to move or do daily activities, call your clinic.

**Who to Call**

UW Health Orthotics Clinic:  
**(608) 263-0583**

Neurosurgery Clinic:  
**(608) 263-1410**

Orthopedic Rehabilitation Spine Clinic:  
**(608) 265-3207**

The toll-free number is: **1-800-323-8942.**

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7960.