



What can patients do following surgery for spinal fusion?

After they have undergone surgery to fuse their spine, patients believe that they now have no further need for physiotherapy exercises.

This is often a mistake because the non-fused spinal segment and its associated trunk segments may slip back into a scoliotic pattern if posture and movement are unfavourable because scoliotic posture and movement patterns persist in the consciousness of patients who have undergone surgery. They are not suddenly corrected with surgery. It is therefore important that patients learn specific exercises to achieve correct posture and to provide them with corrected stability below and above the fused segment. The mobile segments in these locations are often overloaded, and this may cause painful symptoms.

Of course, to avoid loosening the implant, the fused spinal segment must not be mobilised. Nevertheless it is necessary to perform exercises to correct posture in order to stabilise the non-fused segments. After spondylodesis, too, loss of correction may occur but this can be largely offset by appropriate exercises.

The journal *Krankengymnastik (Zeitschrift für Physiotherapie)* 1996, vol. 48, no. 2 includes a profusely illustrated article in German by Christa Lehnert-Schroth entitled "Krankengymnastische Behandlung von Patienten mit operativ versteifter Skoliose" [Physiotherapy for patients with surgically fused scoliosis]. The muscles and joints of the shoulders and arms as well as those of the hips and legs need to function properly because these are the starting point for performing the appropriate **Schroth** stabilisation exercises.

As well as postural correction, patients who have undergone surgical fusion of the spine also need their often defective respiratory function to be improved.

Schroth is a conservative treatment method for scoliosis. Scoliosis surgery is seldom necessary. Physical therapy specifically designed for scoliosis offers relief from pain and sometimes partial reversal of the scoliotic curve. The Schroth alternative method for scoliosis treatment can also help people who have already had spinal fusion surgery.