



# Spinal Brace

## What is a spinal brace/orthosis?

A spinal orthosis is a brace designed to control the movement of the back. Spinal braces are made of various materials. This will be chosen based on your clinical needs.

## Wearing the spinal brace

It is important that the spinal brace is fitted as instructed by the Orthotist.

- It is advised that the brace is worn over a vest or snug fitting t-shirt for comfort and as an interface between the skin and brace material. Girls can wear a bra underneath the brace, often with under-wiring removed.
- It is advised that, preferably, the brace be applied whilst lying down or alternatively by standing up and bending your hips and knees.
- When putting the brace on, it is very important that the waist area of the brace aligns exactly into the patient's waist and that the opening is centred appropriately.
- The brace should be fastened initially at the middle strap and then top and bottom straps. It is important that these straps are fastened firmly to provide a snug fit in order for the brace to be effective and to reduce likelihood of skin abrasions.

Please follow an initial wearing regime when you first receive your orthosis, before wearing the brace usually for most of the day and night (23 hours) with breaks for washing and exercise.

## Breaking in period

Over a period of 2-3 weeks, gradually increase the time per day in your orthosis. The following program is designed to help your skin and muscles adjust to the orthosis:

### STAGE I:

- Aim to wear orthosis 6 hours daily. Best

accomplished after school and up to bedtime.

- Apply orthosis for 2 hours.
- Remove orthosis, check skin. If your skin is just pink, reapply orthosis for 2 more hours and repeat up to 6 hours total.
- If your skin is sore and red, wait 30 minutes and wear for 2 more hours up to 6 hours total.

### STAGE II:

- Aim to wear orthosis 10 hours daily.
- Apply orthosis for 4 hours.
- Remove orthosis, check skin.
- Reapply orthosis for 3 hours.
- Remove orthosis, check skin.
- Reapply orthosis up to 10 hours total.

### STAGE III:

- Aim to wear orthosis 18-23 hours daily.
- Apply orthosis before school.
- At lunchtime or 4 hours later, remove orthosis, check skin, (your school nurse can help).
- Reapply orthosis.
- After school, remove orthosis.
- Reapply orthosis at bedtime.
- Sleep in orthosis.
- Once you are able to sleep in your orthosis, you have achieved your goal of orthosis wearing!
- Make time daily for bathing, skin care, undershirt changes, and exercise.

## Considerations and Skin Care

- The brace should be worn in gradually so you get used to the feel of the brace. You will need to persevere, be patient but be



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firm.

- During the Breaking in Period your balance will be affected by the use of spinal orthosis.
- Your child may experience some general muscle aches until used to wearing the brace
- When you remove your child's brace, always check their skin
- The brace will leave red marks on your child's skin as it is close fitting. The skin will gradually build up resistance to the brace, especially the waist area.
- Do not use greasy ointment, cream or talcum powder under the brace as they soften the skin. If lotion is used make sure the skin is dry before applying the brace.
- If there are persistent areas of redness, blisters or skin breakdown then stop wearing the brace and contact the Orthotics department for review. Pink marks can be normal and should fade after 30 minutes upon removal.
- To prevent skin breakdown - Bathe Daily, wear underpants over the orthosis, wear the brace as tight as possible as a loose orthosis may allow excessive movement creating rubs and abrasions.
- If there is skin breakdown (sore, red, raw skin) the orthosis must not be reapplied until the skin heals (one day or more). If this happens, call your nurse or orthotist.
- Sometimes the skin over the waist and hips gets darker. This is common and is not a problem. When the orthosis treatment is complete, the discoloration will fade.

### Exercise

Although exercise programs have not been

shown to affect the natural history of scoliosis, exercise is encouraged in patients with scoliosis to minimize any potential decrease in functional ability over time. It is very important for all people, including those with scoliosis, to exercise and remain physically fit. For boys and girls, exercising and participating in sports also improves their general sense of wellbeing. The purpose of exercises is to develop postural awareness and gain ability to maintain correct alignment both in and out of the brace. They help maintain flexibility and muscle strength in areas that have a direct effect on brace fit. Continue with sport and other activities when in brace.

### Purpose of exercise out of brace:

1. Develop postural awareness and ability to maintain corrected alignment.
2. Maintain and/or increase chest mobility for proper respiration.
3. Maintain and/or increase muscle strength as indicated in Trunk (emphasize abdominals) and Scapulae
4. Maintain and/or increase spinal flexibility.
5. Maintain and/or increase range of motion (prevent contractures, especially hip flexors)
6. Provide a good physical condition.

### Purpose of exercise in brace

1. Develop postural awareness and ability to maintain corrected alignment as provided by the brace (very important).
2. Enhance patient comfort.
3. Assist patient to resume previous activity level: Activities such as swimming should be performed out of the brace.

### Cleaning of the brace

You should clean the brace daily with a



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damp cloth and soapy water. Wipe and dry completely before putting the brace on your child. Alcohol wipes may be used to disinfect the brace and lining. The straps and padding may become worn and can be replaced.

### Your child growing

Although all spinal braces are different and individually made to suit your child, they share similar warning signs that indicate that the brace may be becoming outgrown. The lifespan of a brace may be between 6 and 18 months and is dependent upon your child's rate of growth. Warning signs include:

- Increased incidence or prolonged signs of rubbing and skin irritation particularly on bony prominences.
- Increased opening gap and difficulty to fasten straps as firmly as instructed.
- Increased clearance of the legs and arms from the bottom and top edges of the brace.
- Complaints of discomfort from the brace.

If you think your child is outgrowing the brace please contact the Orthotics department. If in doubt, please contact the orthotics department for review. It takes approximately eight weeks to replace your brace so please call in plenty of time.

### Additional Information

#### Confidentiality

The Trust is committed to keeping your information safe and secure, and to protecting your confidentiality. For more information about how we do this please read the Trust's leaflet: "Ensuring Information Confidentiality". This is available in waiting areas, on the Trust website ([www.roh.nhs.uk](http://www.roh.nhs.uk)) or by contacting the Communications team on 0121 685 4329.

### Patient Support

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers help, support and advice to patients, their relative, friends and carers. PALS can help answer questions you have about hospital services; respond to problems or concerns; and welcome your suggestions or comments, both positive and negative. PALS can be contacted by phone, Monday to Friday, 8.30am and 4.30pm.

### Patient Experience

As a hospital we are committed to listening to the views of our patients and using the feedback to inform service improvement plans. You may be asked to complete a number of surveys at different stages during your treatment. Please help us by Completing the questionnaires. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

### Dignity and Respect

It is expected that staff, patients and visitors will treat each other with dignity and respect. The hospital operates a zero tolerance policy towards acts of physical or verbal aggression and action, including prosecution where appropriate, will be taken if such behaviour is displayed.

### Infection Prevention and Control

The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital takes Infection Prevention and Control very seriously and we have one of the lowest infection rates in the country. We strive to maintain our high standards of care, hygiene and cleanliness at all times through stringent processes, monitoring and training.

### Car parking

Patients and visitor parking is available at gate entrance A and C, the main visitor car park is located off gate entrance C, close to the



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Outpatients Department. The hospital operates a pay and display system and the following charges apply:

Up to 20 minutes :	Free
Up to 2 hours:	£3.80
Up to 5 hours:	£5.00
Up to 24 hours:	£7.50
Blue Badge up to 5 hours:	£3.80
7 day pass:	£17.50
28 day pass:	£50.00

For information on how to obtain car park passes please ring 0121 685 4201 before your visit for more information.

### Department Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday:  
8.00 am to 12.30 pm  
1.30 pm to 4.30pm

### Contact Details

Orthotics Department	0121 685 4123
PALS	0121 685 4128