

## Dr. Khajavi / Spitz TLSO Brace Instructions

### Purpose

Your thoracolumbar-sacral orthosis (TLSO) brace helps control and support your spinal posture, reduce pain, prevent further injury or hardware loosening, and promotes healing of the fusion. It will remind you to keep your back upright and straight. It is most often prescribed after thoracolumbar spinal fusion surgery and spinal fractures, but occasionally is used in other conditions. You will only wear the brace when out of bed. Never wear the brace in bed, as it can cause a skin breakdown.

### Wearing Your TLSO

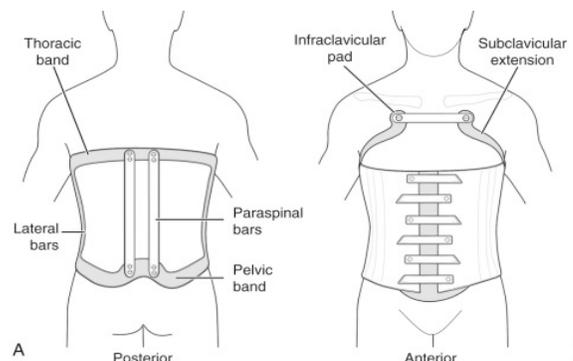
The brace will keep you from bending forward or twisting by making it a little uncomfortable when you begin moving into positions you should avoid. You should be able to do many normal activities by yourself or with a little help from caregivers or special tools. We will review how to put on and remove the brace at your pre-op appointment, or you may receive instructions from the occupational therapist in the hospital on the day after surgery. In some cases you may receive your brace before surgery, but most often it will be delivered to your hospital room the day after surgery.

**Putting on and taking off the TLSO** (this is done in the standing position). These vary by style, below are the instructions for the Trend Correx TLSO brace. Video instructions can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUITqOTO84Q&feature=youtu.be>

Step by step instructions with illustrations can be found at <https://trend-med.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Trend-Correx-Fitting-Guide-PDF.pdf>

1. Loosen the shoulder and put your arms through them, as if putting on a bookbag.

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.



2. Fasten the Velcro panels in the front. The fit should be snug but not tight yet. Make sure the brace is centered on your spine. Use a mirror if needed.

3. Tighten the shoulder straps by pulling down on them. Make sure you have excellent posture when you do this, as if at military attention.

4. Tighten the waist straps by pulling on the two rings together at the same time. Pull until the brace feels tight, but not uncomfortable. Secure the rings to the Velcro on the brace.

5. Find, adjust, and connect the chest support strap.

6. Tighten the shoulder straps by pulling on the two heart shaped tabs.

## **Brace Cleanliness & Hygiene:** (please refer to brace care instructions from brace manufacturer)

We suggest you wear a tight fitting cotton t-shirt under the brace to reduce skin and incision irritation, and to keep the brace clean. A loose t-shirt may be irritating.

Regular cleaning for both the brace and the skin can help prevent skin rashes or lesions. If significant skin irritation occurs, it may be necessary to stop wearing the brace for several days while the skin heals. If the brace is irritating the incision, it may be necessary to use a piece of foam to keep the incision from being irritated. Too much moisture under the brace can irritate the skin and potentially lead to sores and/or skin deterioration. For this reason, avoid using lotions or moisturizers under the brace.

Specific washing instructions are usually provided by the brace manufacturer and should be followed to preserve the brace's longevity and effectiveness. It is generally advised to hand wash the brace using water and a mild soap. Any additional padding or panels should be removed first and washed separately. A brace should be laid flat or hung to dry. Make sure the brace is rinsed thoroughly and dried completely before wearing, as a soapy or wet brace is more likely to irritate skin.

## **Daily Activities**

Your TLSO brace will make it hard to bend over, which is one of the goals of the brace. Avoid bending over to reach your feet or the floor. If you must bend forward, 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.

## **To Avoid Muscle Deconditioning & Stiffness**

One of the side effects of wearing the brace is that the core muscles tend to become deconditioned, or weak. Some degree of this is inevitable and will resolve once physical therapy is started.

Strategies to avoid this include:

1. Walk as much as possible.
2. Take the brace off twice a day for 10 min. Do this only when sitting in a good, firm chair, and do not bend or twist during this time.
3. Do some core muscle exercise that do not involve bending or twisting. This include bicycling in place, leg lifts, lunges, and even just actively contracting your core
4. Try also to stretch your hip flexors and extensors, hamstrings, and quadricep muscles, but again without bending or twisting.

## **How long do I need to wear the TLSO?**

In most cases you will need to wear the brace for 3 months, but length can vary. Your doctor will decide how long you need to wear your TLSO. Follow your doctor's advice even if you feel better and would like to stop wearing it sooner. Once the decision is made that the brace is no longer needed, you will need to wean if off gradually, meaning wear it less and less each day, over a period of about a week. This allows your back and core muscles to accommodate.

**If you have any question, feel free to call our office at 404-299-3338, or 404-254-3160.**