

Exercises after having a spinal cord or peripheral nerve stimulator implant

Information for patients



This booklet is intended for patients (or their family or carers) who have had a spinal cord or peripheral nerve stimulator implanted.

This leaflet contains some exercises to do at home to help improve the range of movement in your body after your surgery. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

Please note if you have other medical conditions that may affect you exercising, please seek medical advice first.

What is a spinal cord stimulator implant?

A spinal cord stimulator implant is a device that is surgically placed under the skin and sends low levels of electricity directly into the spinal cord to relieve pain.

What is a peripheral nerve stimulator implant?

Peripheral Nerve Stimulation (PNS) is the stimulation of a peripheral nerve by tiny electrical impulses.

Why do I need to do these exercises?

These exercises are designed to help with your recovery after having a stimulator implanted. They focus on improving your flexibility and strength.

When should I start doing these exercises?

You should start doing these exercises six weeks after your surgery.

How often should I do these exercises?

We recommend starting with just a few repetitions per exercise and then gradually building up the number of repetitions when you feel stronger.

To help you keep track of your progress, we have included a record chart at the end of this factsheet for you to make a note of how many repetitions you manage each day.

You do not need to do these exercises every day. However, you should aim to do some form of gentle exercise three times a week to aid your recovery.

Are there any risks?

You may find these exercises uncomfortable to begin with, but this will improve over time. None of the exercises included in this factsheet should cause you any pain. If an exercise causes you any pain, stop doing the exercise and move on to a different one.

It is important not to push through pain in the early stages, but equally important that you try some to aid your recovery.

Walking is also a great exercise to aid your recovery.

Exercises

Ankle pumps

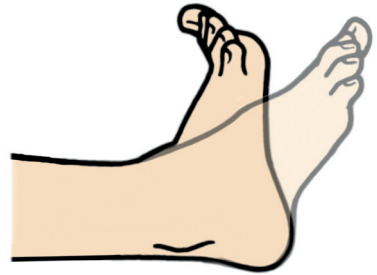
Please do not do this exercise if your lead has been implanted in you lower leg near your ankle.

This exercise is designed to strengthen your ankle muscles and help improve the circulation in your legs.

How to perform the exercise

1. Lie on your back.
2. Bend and straighten your ankles to pump your feet up and down.

You can also do this exercise when sitting in a chair.



Bridge

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles in your abdomen and at the back of your hip.

How to perform the exercise

1. Lie on your back on a bed with your knees bent.
2. Tighten your abdominal muscles (pull your tummy in) to tilt your pelvis backwards.
3. Slowly lift your bottom off the bed by a few inches. Do this by tightening your bottom muscles and keeping your pelvis tilted backwards.



Knee extension while sitting

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles at the front of your thighs.

How to perform the exercise

1. Sit with your legs over the side of a bed or a chair.
2. Bend and straighten your knee to move your foot up and down.
3. Repeat for your other leg.



Sit to stand

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles that straighten your legs.

How to perform the exercise

1. Sit on a chair with your arms crossed and your feet shoulder width apart.
2. Bring your shoulders forward and stand up straight.
3. Stick your bottom back and sit back down.



Helpful tips

Place the chair against a wall if your chair is likely to tip backwards and choose a higher chair if you find it too difficult.

Stepping up and down stairs

This exercise is designed to improve your ability to walk up and down stairs.

How to perform the exercise

1. Stand at the bottom of a set of stairs with your foot placed on the first step.
2. Practice stepping up onto the second step with your other foot.
3. Ensure your hip and knee straighten fully before placing your foot on the second step.
4. Step down again and repeat with your other leg.



Standing hamstring curl

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles at the back of your thighs.

How to perform the exercise

1. Stand up straight with your hands resting on a table in front of you.
2. Bend your knee to lift your heel towards your bottom (keeping your hip straight).
3. Bring your leg back down to the ground.
4. Repeat for your other leg.



Standing hip abduction

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles on the outside of your hip.

How to perform the exercise

1. Stand up straight with your feet together.
2. Holding onto a steady support, lift your leg out to the side (keeping your body upright and your toes pointing forward).
3. Bring your leg back down to the ground.
4. Repeat for your other leg.



Standing hip flexion

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles on the outside of your hip.

How to perform the exercise

1. Stand up straight with your feet together.
2. Holding onto a steady support, lift your leg out to the side (keeping your body upright and your toes pointing forward).
3. Bring your leg back down to the ground.
4. Repeat for your other leg.



Squats

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles on the outside of your hip.

How to perform the exercise

1. Stand up straight with your feet together.
2. Holding onto a steady support, lift your leg out to the side (keeping your body upright and your toes pointing forward).
3. Bring your leg back down to the ground.
4. Repeat for your other leg.



Record chart

If you find the exercises are uncomfortable or if you are unsure as to whether you should be doing them, please seek advice from your Consultant or the Pain Nurses

Pain Nurses contact number: 0113 392 2178 (please leave a message with your name, NHS number and reason for call and someone will get back to you).

Exercise	Day	Number of repetitions					
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Ankle pumps	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Bridge	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							

Exercise	Day	Number of repetitions					
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Knee extension while sitting	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Sit to stand	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Stepping up and down stairs	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							


Exercise	Day	Number of repetitions					
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Standing hamstring curl	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Standing hip abduction	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Standing hip flexion	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							

Exercise	Day	Number of repetitions					
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Squats	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Other	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							
Other	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
Notes							

Contact us

Chronic Pain Clinical Nurse specialists

- 0113 392 2178 (Monday - Friday 8am-4pm)
- Email: leedsth-tr.chronicpainnurses@nhs.net



Adapted with permission from material produced by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

What did you think of your care? Visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
Your views matter

© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition (Ver 1)

Developed by: Jenny Jennings - Team Leader - Chronic Pain & Neuromodulation

Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20230706_001/MH

LN005664
Publication date
10/2023
Review date
10/2026