

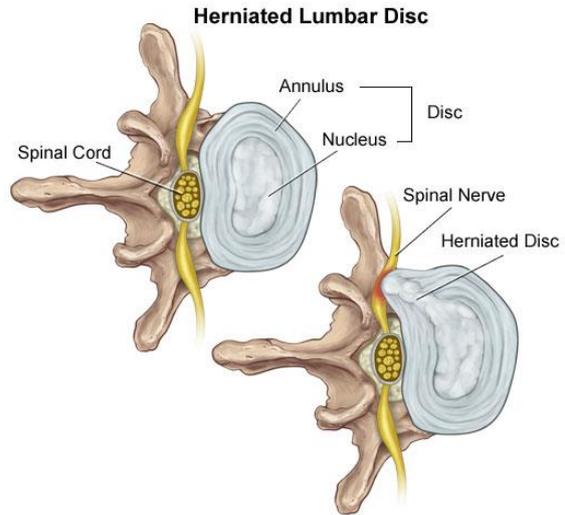
EXERCISE SHEET FOR HERNIATED DISC

What is a herniated disc?

When you have a herniated disc the nucleus of the disc has been pushed through the annulus and is irritating the nerve root. Normally lumbar herniated discs are caused by bending forwards and lifting objects. The disc can be likened to a jam doughnut, when you bend forward the jam is squeezed towards the back of the doughnut. If too much pressure is applied the jam will push out of the back wall. The disc itself is made from a hard cartilage but the inside is a soft gel like liquid.

The main principle of treating a herniated disc is to push the jam from the posterior (back side) towards the anterior (front) side of the disc. This is achieved by bending backwards, forward bending or flexion should be avoided.

Sometimes while performing these exercise the pain will increase, you may also feel some pins and needles down your leg. If these sensation are too uncomfortable you should stop.



Lying Prone



When you get up in the morning you should lay prone on the floor for 2 minutes, with your arms down by your side, this increases lumbar lordosis and pushes the herniation back towards the front of the disk.

Sphinx Pose – Prone Prop McKenzie

Lying down in the prone position, place your hands in front of you and push yourself into the sphinx position as shown. Hold this position for 5 seconds then return to the prone position. This should be repeated 5 times every 2 – 3 hours. You may find that his exercise increases the pain in your back but



reduces the pain in your feet or legs, this is a good sign. However if the pain gets worse in your feet or legs you should stop.

Yoga Cobras or Mckenzie Push Ups



This is an advance exercise for the latter stages of rehab and should be used with caution!

The patient lays prone on the floor with the feet spread apart. The hands are placed by the side of the chest and the elbows are straightened so that the cobra position is achieved. This position should be held for 5 seconds, 5 sets every 2 – 3 hours. Again, if the pain in the feet and legs decrease but pain in the back is felt this is an improvement. An increase in the pain in the feet or legs is a sign to stop this exercise.

Standing Extensions



Standing in an upright position with your hands on your hips, extend your spine so that you arch your back, the hips should also move forward in the action, try not to over use your lower back muscles. This position should be held for 5 seconds, 5 sets every 2 – 3 hours.

