

Royal North Shore Hospital

Orthotics Department

Occupational Therapy Department

Physiotherapy Department

Acute Care



Anterior Opening TLSO: Guidelines

Patient and Carer Information Booklet

If you have any further questions regarding the content of this booklet please contact your:

Orthotist: Phone 02 9463 2303
Occupational Therapist: Phone 02 9462 9666
Physiotherapist: Phone 02 9462 9747



Health
Northern Sydney
Local Health District

Anterior Opening TLSO (Thoraco-Lumbo-Sacral Orthosis) Spinal Brace

Purpose of the TLSO Brace:

The brace can be worn after spinal injury or surgery for the following reasons:

1. Immobilises your spine during healing
2. Restricts movement in injured areas
3. Controls pain by restricting movement

You need to wear the brace for as long as your consultant has instructed.

Precautions:

Minimise these activities when wearing your brace:

- No twisting or bending of your back
- Sit in a firm, high chair with suitable back support
- Do not sit for longer than 30-40 minutes
- Do not lift objects that weigh greater than 2kgs or 4 pounds (e.g. 2L of milk)
- Pushing and pulling (e.g. pushing a shopping trolley)



Sleeping:

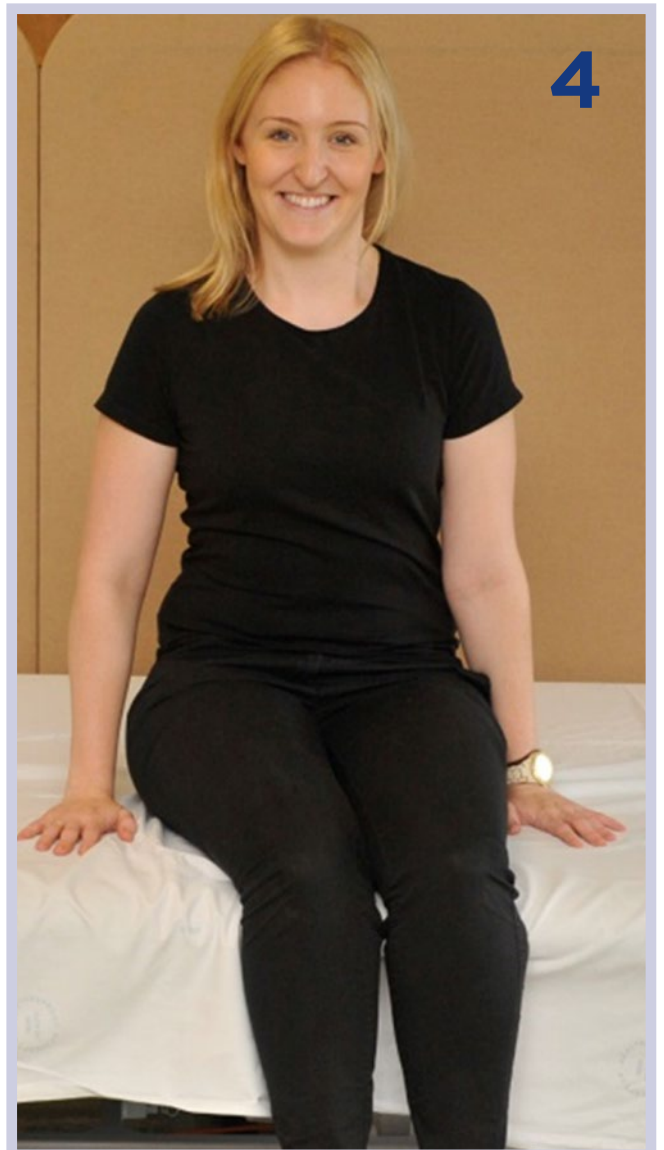
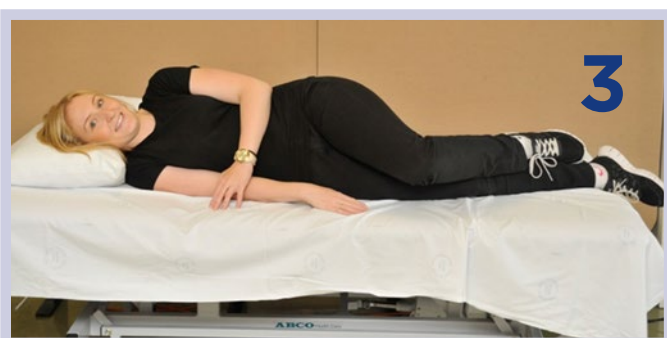
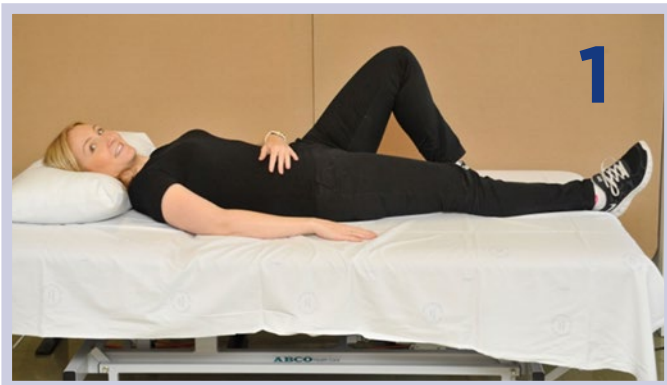
- Do not wear the brace in bed. Wear the brace at all other times
- You should sleep on your back for the duration of time in the brace
- Log roll to reposition yourself in bed

To get out of bed:

- Bend outside knee
- Bring arms toward the edge of the bed
- Keep your hip and shoulders in line as you roll onto your side.
- Drop your legs off the bed
- Push up with your arms to a sitting position
- Keep your spine and neck straight and do not twist your body as you roll

To get into bed, reverse this process:

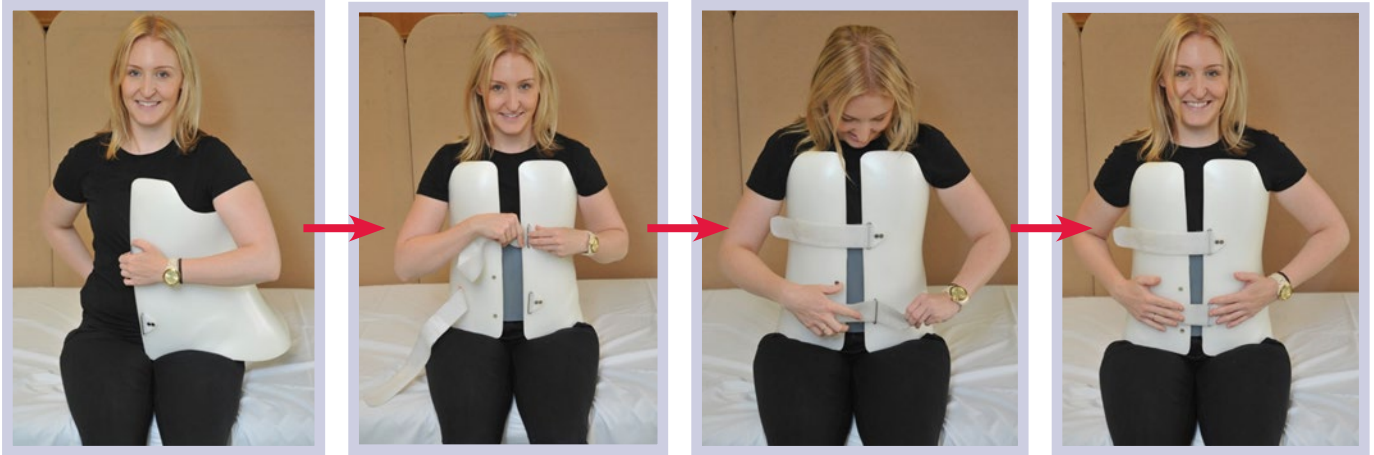
- Sit on the bed, with your bottom as far back as possible.
- Lean to the side and lower your trunk to the bed
- Lift both legs off the floor onto the bed
- Roll over onto your back with both knees bent
- Keep your spine and neck straight and do not twist your body as you roll



Putting Brace On and Off:

Your Physiotherapist and Orthotist will explain, demonstrate and practice how to take your brace on and off.

- Sit on the edge of the bed
- Wear a tight fitting singlet/t-shirt underneath the brace
- Apply TLSO
- It is important to avoid twisting your back when putting the brace on and off



Pressure Injury Prevention:

A **pressure injury** is an injury to the skin caused by unrelieved pressure and may occur when you are unable to move due to injury or surgery. They may develop under or around braces or from being in the same position for too long.

Signs of a pressure injury:

- Redness / skin discoloration
- Tenderness, pain, or itching in affected areas
- Blistering
- Broken skin

Reducing the risk of pressure injury:

- Check your skin daily for red areas. It is easiest to do this straight after the brace is removed when lying in bed
- Do not wear your TLSO if it is wet
- Keep your skin dry

If the areas of redness do not go away and you have increasing discomfort please notify your Orthotist on (02) 9463 2303 to have your brace reviewed.

Showering/Bathing:

Your Anterior Opening TLSO brace is waterproof:

- Shower with your brace on. Remove brace after showering, dry and then reapply. It is best to shower just before going to bed to allow the brace to dry overnight

OR

- Remove the brace and have someone sponge bathe you while you lay flat in bed with the brace off

NB: It is important you do not bend or twist your back while the TLSO brace is removed

Your Occupational Therapist will assist in recommending appropriate assistive equipment for you.

Shower chair and shower stool



Shower chair



Shower stool

Images courtesy of Independent Living Specialists

Toileting:

The brace should remain on while toileting. Bend at your hips and knees to sit on the toilet. Men may find it easier to use urinal bottles.

If you are finding it difficult to wipe your bottom, you may find an extended handle bottom wiper helpful. Your Occupational Therapist can advise on techniques and equipment that can make toileting easier.



Over toilet aid



Urinal bottle



Bottom wiper

Dressing:

Wear a well fitted cotton t-shirt under the brace. Application of clothing will become difficult as you will not be able to bend. Your Occupational Therapist can advise you on techniques to make dressing easier.

- Wear clothes with elastic (i.e. tracksuit pants)
- Ensure that pants are worn over the base of the brace
- If you wish, wear loose tops over the brace. Shirts with buttons are easier to apply
- Long handled reaching aid can help pull up pants and underpants
- Long handled shoe horn will assist with application of shoes
- Shoes without laces or elasticised laces will be easier to apply and remove



Long handled reacher



Long handled shoe horn



Long handled reacher

Transport/Driving:

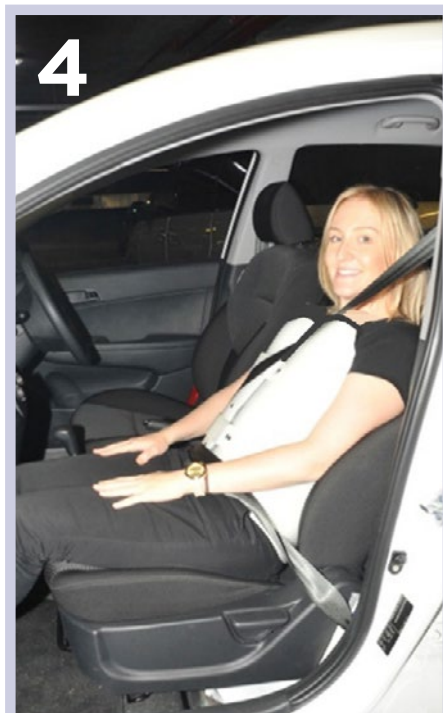
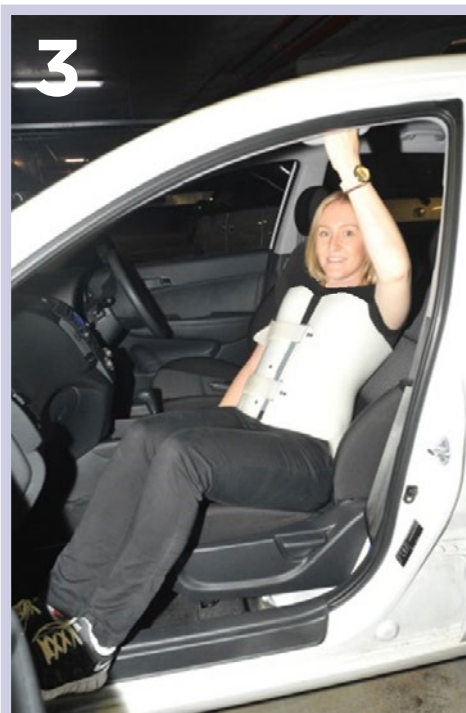
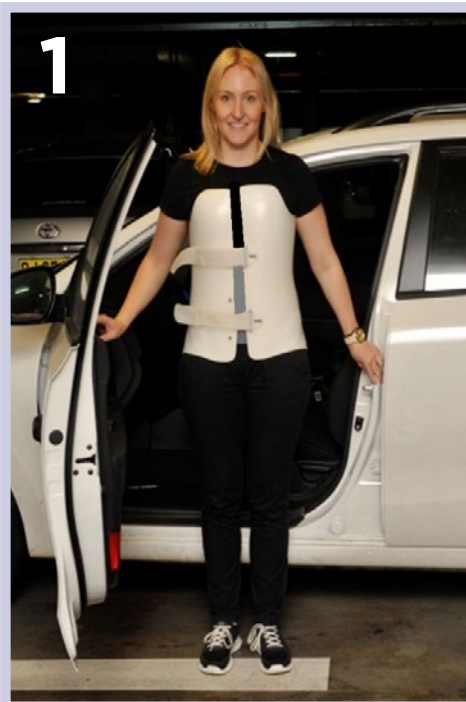
Do not drive until your consultant gives you permission

How to get into the car:

- Ensure the seat is pushed back and reclined
- Bend at your hips and knees, lower your bottom onto the seat
- Swing your legs into the car

Plan regular breaks if you are travelling for more than 30 minutes.

NB: Refer to the Austroads Fitness to Drive guidelines or ask your Occupational Therapist or Consultant for further driving instructions.



Lifting:

Discuss your maximum lifting tolerance with your consultant

- Avoid lifting items more than 2kgs. Have assistance with 'heavier' tasks such as:
- Shopping
- Carrying pots and pans and other kitchen appliances
- Vacuuming, mopping
- Laundry
- Gardening
- Child care

Tip: Break up groceries or laundry into smaller loads by taking more frequent trips



2L Milk = 2kg

Work:

- Plan your return carefully: look at your job requirements and ask if there are lighter duties
- Maintain all driving and lifting restrictions
- Set up your work place area to allow good posture and comfort
- Take regular breaks
- Talk to your Occupational Therapist for further discussion on returning to work

Sex:

Ask your consultant when you can return to sexual activity. Avoid postures that put strain on your back. You may need to assume a more passive role for a time. If you have concerns or have increasing pain, ask your consultant.

Exercise:

The best exercise during your recovery is walking. Increase your distance daily as guided by your physiotherapist and fatigue.

Brace adjustments:

Adjustments are made by the Orthotist's. Do not make any adjustments yourself.

Further Questions:

If you have any further questions regarding the content of this book, please discuss with your Orthotist, Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.

You can contact an Interpreter using the Translations Interpreter Service - TIS (free call) on 131 450.

Checklist of Education / Training Prior to Discharge

- I understand my movement precautions
- My carer and I both feel confident with applying and removing the brace in the correct manner
- I understand how to check for and prevent pressure areas
- I am able to get in and out of bed independently
- I understand how to shower, toilet and dress whilst wearing my brace

Thank you to all participants who have allowed the use of their images in the production of this booklet

