

# Thoracolumbosacral Orthosis (TLSO Brace)

NHS Lothian /  
South East Trauma Network



## FRONT



## BACK



### Purpose of the brace

Following the injury to your spine the brace helps limit movement and provides stability while your injury heals. Your brace may also come with an extra piece that fits against your chest. The Orthotist will assess if this is needed and if so, explain the reason for this.

Continue wearing the brace as instructed until this is reviewed and the plan adjusted by your medical team

You need to put the brace on lying flat:	Yes	No
You can put the brace on in sitting:	Yes	No
You need to wear the brace when sitting up:	Yes	No
You will need to sleep with the brace on:	Yes	No

You need to wear the brace for a period of \_\_\_\_ weeks, until advised otherwise at your fracture clinic appointment.

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Lothian

## How to put the brace on:

**1.** Lying on your back, roll onto your side, aiming to keep the spine aligned; roll by holding your arms across your chest (hands to opposite shoulders) and bend your knees



**2.** Position the back section so that it is centrally aligned. With your helper, ensure the bottom edge is in line with the base of your lower back.

**3.** They can press down on the mattress to feed the strap under your side.



**4.** Holding the brace in place roll onto your back. Ensure the brace is located centrally on your back – the curve within the back piece should follow the natural curve of your lower back.

**5.** Put the front section in place, making sure it is aligned with your waist.

**6.** At this point you may need to make small adjustments to ensure it is correctly placed.

**7.** Pull the velcro straps one after the other over the front section.



**8.** Press down the dials and turn both to the right to tighten as needed. To loosen them pull the dial outwards and this will release the tension.

**9.** If when sitting/standing up, you notice the back section of the brace is skew or too high/low, please repeat above steps until correct.



## How to remove the brace

1. Lie flat on your back, pull on the dials to loosen off and then undo the front Velcro straps. Lift off the front section; you may also undo one strap and keep the second strap on as a 'hinge' to open the brace.
2. Roll onto your side keeping the spine aligned (same technique as above)
3. Remove the back section.
4. Roll onto your back keeping the spine aligned

## General Advice

1. The brace should be kept on at all times except when lying down - unless the consultant has advised you otherwise.
2. The brace should be tight but comfortable.
3. The brace should be worn over thin, preferably cotton clothing such as a T-Shirt or vest. You should avoid clothing with buttons or jewellery that would be pressed against your body by the brace.
4. When sitting on a chair, the bottom of the brace at the back should be just sitting above the seat of the chair, if this is catching the chair, it will cause the brace to rise up.
5. Skin checks should be carried out by a family member. Remove the brace for short periods during the day when lying down to allow your skin to breathe. If there is an area of broken skin, please get it reviewed by a practice nurse or GP and contact the Orthotics Department to have the brace reviewed.
6. Use pain relief in the first few weeks to allow you to move comfortably. If high levels of pain persist, contact your GP.
7. The brace can be cleaned by wiping it over with a damp cloth and leaving it to dry; do not place on a radiator or a fire to dry as this can damage the brace structure.



## Daily Activities Advice

1. Bathing and showering are not permitted; your occupational therapist or physiotherapist can further discuss this with you.
2. Position changes and pacing yourself throughout the day can help manage your pain; it is best to do 'little and often'.
3. Avoid heavy lifting (no more than 5kg) and prolonged bending or twisting movements.
4. To put on socks and shoes, sit down and place your foot on your knee. You can consider a long handle shoehorn. When dressing your lower body, we recommend you sit down and bring your legs up bending at the hips and knees.
5. You can start light housework tasks as your pain allows. Kitchen tasks are best done at a counter top surface to avoid bending or overreaching.
6. Walking is recommended to aid your recovery. It will increase your activity levels and help reduce stiffness. Start with short distances and gradually increase as able
7. Returning to work depends on your recovery and tasks involved in your job. Returning to heavy, manual tasks may take longer.
8. You are not able to drive as long as you are required to wear the brace.
9. Unless told otherwise follow up physiotherapy is initially not required. Please discuss the need for future physiotherapy at your fracture clinic appointment.

**This leaflet is not meant to replace any discussion with your health care team, please let us know if you have any questions**