

Safe Sex Positions After Back Surgery

Engaging in sexual activity after back surgery should be done with caution, just like all other activities of daily living. The key thing to remember is avoid the BLTs (Bending, Lifting, and Twisting). Follow the tips in this handout to help you get back to sexual activity without injury.

When is it safe to have sex?

It is recommended that you avoid sexual activity for at least 1 to 2 days after you are walking without pain. Talk to your care provider about your specific issues and whether you can start sooner. Always remember: "If it hurts, don't do it."

How do I protect my back during sexual activity?



To protect your back, follow these guidelines:



- Movements should be slow and taken with care.
- Pillows and rolled up towels can be used for additional support behind the head, shoulders, knees, and lower back.
- Take the time to plan ahead. Planning ensures that you are protecting your back. Gather pillows and rolled towels ahead of time. Engage in non-strenuous stretching to prepare your body.
- Find a position that is comfortable for you, take a more passive role, and avoid thrusting hard. Again, "If it hurts, don't do it."
- Consider other forms of intimacy that may be more appropriate while you wait for your body to fully heal. Manual stimulation and oral sex may be more appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns about sexual activity after surgery, ask your occupational therapist.

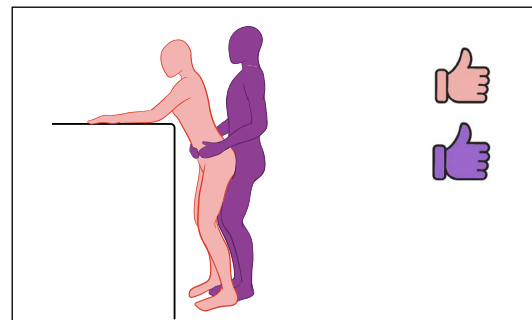
How to use this handout:

The colors match the illustrated bodies.

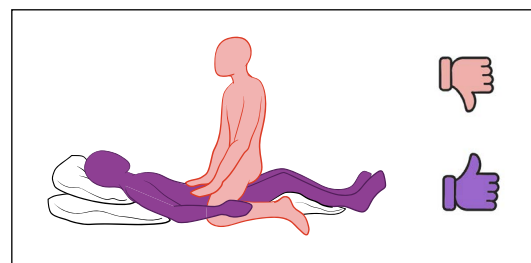
  **OK.** This position is **safe** for the person recovering from back surgery.

  **STOP.** This position is **not safe** for the person recovering from back surgery.

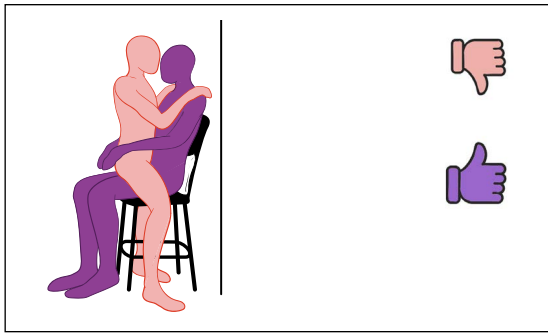
Standing: This position is generally safe and comfortable for both partners in either position. Leaning against a wall will ensure stability and reduce risk of unwanted falls. It can also help you avoid excessive bending at the waist, twisting, and back arching. Avoid excessive thrusting if taking the back position.



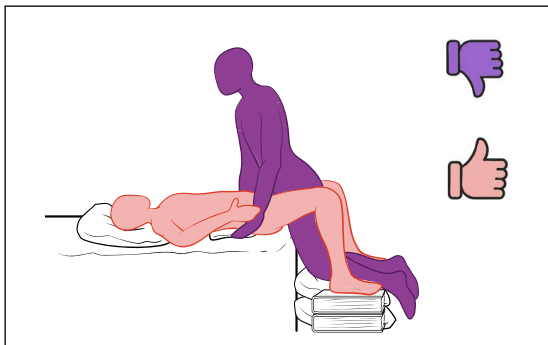
Sitting on top: The person recovering from back surgery should take position on the bottom. For added comfort, prop up your shoulders and knees with pillows. To avoid added strain to the back, allow the partner on top to take a more active role.



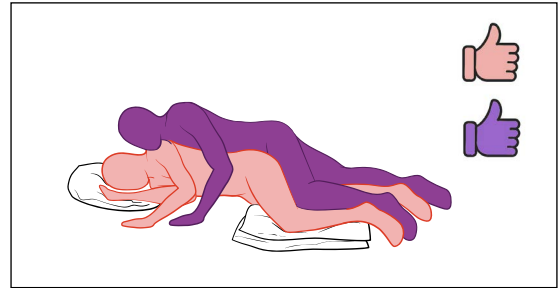
Chair sitting: The person recovering from back surgery should sit on the chair. A small pillow may be placed behind the low back for additional comfort. It may be useful to put the chair against a wall to avoid accidental tipping over. Try to find a chair that places the knees and hips at 90 degrees. Do not bend beyond that angle. Be mindful of where your partner places their hands so they don't put pressure on your surgery site.



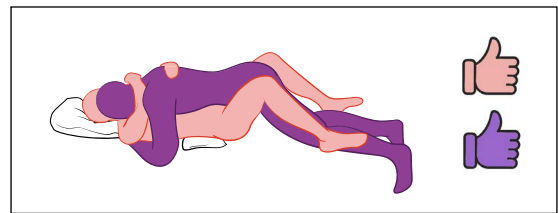
Back lying: The person recovering from back surgery should take the position on their back. Scoot your buttocks near the edge of the bed. Place both feet flat on the floor. If that is not possible, stack firm cushions or books under both feet so that the back does not arch. Place pillows under the head, neck, or shoulders as needed. A small pillow under the low back may also help. Your partner can kneel in front of you, placing both hands on either side of your body.



Side lying: When in this position, whether male or female, try to avoid excessive thrusting. Avoid twisting your body — keep your shoulders and hips in a straight line. When in the front position, place pillows under your top knee, waist, and head for additional support. When in the back position, avoid excessive bending of the top hip.



Face-to face: This position is generally comfortable for both partners and in either position. A pillow can be placed under the low back, shoulders, and head for additional comfort. Additionally, pillows can be placed under the knees. If taking the bottom position, avoid bending the hips past 90 degrees.



Perpendicular [per-pen-DIK-yoo-lahr]: This position is generally comfortable for both partners in either position. If in the back lying position, place a pillow under the low back and avoid bending the knees past 90 degrees. You can place pillows under the feet or rest your feet on your partner's top leg to avoid back arching. Avoid excessive thrusting when in the side lying position.

