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**Tips to maintain
a better life with SCI**

SCI

Prevalence

When the spinal cord of a person gets injured, nerves often get damaged. This can cause specific type of pain-nerve pain from spinal cord injury. This type of injury causes chronic pain condition and may even get worse in due course of time.

As per report of the International Conference (Spinal Injuries Management, New Delhi), the incidence of **Spinal Cord Injury** is estimated at 15 new cases per million per year in India.

Symptoms

The type of symptom and intensity of pain depends on patient to patient. The common symptoms are as follows

- ▶ Burning
- ▶ Stabbing
- ▶ Throbbing
- ▶ Sharp pain
- ▶ Tingling
- ▶ Numbness
- ▶ Electric shock like pain



Do's

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Don'ts

- ▶ **Taking Pain Medications:** If your doctor prescribes pain medications, it is important to stay on the top of the recommended dosage in order to prevent pain from escalating.
- ▶ **Physical Therapy:** It is a type of rehabilitation that helps you re-learn how to move and perform certain activities to reduce your risk of injury recurrence of pain.
- ▶ **Wear a Brace, if needed:** It will help stabilize your back as it heals.
- ▶ **Moving regularly:** Regular, gentle movement helps keep blood circulating and speeds up healing.
- ▶ **Climbing Stairs:** Going up and down stairs once or twice a day is fine for few weeks, but try not to overdo it.
- ▶ **Bending at the Waist:** Instead bend at the knees and squat down to pick up objects.
- ▶ **Avoid lifting heavy weights**
- ▶ **Donot smoke cigarettes or use tobacco products**
- ▶ **Exercising:** Beyond simple walking, don't start swimming, golfing, running or other strenuous exercise

Exercises

Physical activity is important for overall health and wellness. Regular activity is a key factor in managing SCI along with meal planning, taking medication as required, and stress management.

Tips on exercises for SCI

Strength Training

Strength training targets major muscle groups that you can control. These muscles will differ for everyone depending on their SCI. To start, plan to perform each exercise at least 10 times (10 repetitions = 1 set). Take a short break. Repeat each set one or two times.



Scheduling Exercise

It is best to exercise in routines of at least 30 minutes. But even as little as 10 minutes of physical activity at a time can provide health benefits. If possible, spread out your exercises throughout the week. The more time you spend exercising, the more health benefits you'll get!



Stretching

Daily stretches can help your joints move more smoothly. You may hear this called range of motion. Focus on the big muscle groups: calves, thighs, hips, lower back, and shoulders. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Stop if it hurts.



Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise is particularly good for cardiovascular health that will help people who have survived Spinal Cord Injury. Aerobic exercise should include three phases:

- Warm up by stretching and doing a light intensity activity. These slowly increase your heart rate and warm up your muscles.
- Exercise at a moderate or vigorous intensity (based on the talk test).
- Cool down by doing a light intensity activity. This slowly decreases your heart rate.

