Early Rehab after Lumbar Disc Removal

Medical experts know that an active rehab program after back surgery is helpful. Patients who have had a disc removed in the low back area tend to get better with active exercise. They often have less pain, more movement, and more function.

But what happens to these patients much later? How are they doing five years later? Doctors and physiotherapists in Sweden studied this question. They divided patients into an early active treatment (EAT) group and a less active treatment group.

Men and women of all ages were part of the study. All the patients had symptoms caused by disc herniation in the low back. Treatment without surgery hadn't helped these patients. Surgery to remove the problem disc was done on everyone in both groups.

A rehab program was started right after surgery for both groups. This was earlier than in most centers. The rehab lasted 12 weeks. It was started while in the hospital and continued at home during that time. The patients in the EAT group had fewer re-operations. The early rehab program didn't seem to affect anyone negatively in either group. Both groups had the same number of sick days.

Returning to work after low back disc surgery is the goal of most patients. An active rehab program after surgery can help improve a patient's chances of living without medications and getting back to work. According to this study, getting started early in a training program doesn't increase the chances of reinjury requiring another operation.