

# VCU Health — Department of Neurosurgery

## Postoperative Restrictions Decompression/Discectomy

Attending: James H. Mooney, MD

Nurse Assistants: Marsha Hallinan, R.N., B.S.N.; JoAnn Tillett, R.N.

Activity	Earliest Time to Resume	Notes/Conditions
Showering	POD 2-3	Let water run over incision; no scrubbing/soaking.
Walking	Immediate	Encouraged daily as tolerated.
Riding in a car	Immediate	Take breaks every 30-45 min.
Going to restaurant/store	1 week	As tolerated.
Desk work	1-2 weeks	Light duty.
Driving	1 week	Off narcotics and safe movement.
Stationary bike	4-6 weeks	After incision healed.
Physical therapy	4-6 weeks	If symptoms persist.
Swimming	4-6 weeks	Incision fully healed.
Light jogging	4-6 weeks	Gradual progression.
Sexual activity	4-6 weeks	As tolerated.
Bending/lifting/twisting	6 weeks	Avoid repetitive strain early.
Heavy labor/contact sports	3-6 months	Gradual return based on symptoms.

### Call the Clinic or Seek Care If You Experience:

- New or worsening weakness, numbness, or bowel/bladder changes.
- Fever > 101.5°F, redness, swelling, or drainage from the incision.
- Uncontrolled pain, chest pain, or shortness of breath.

This handout provides typical guidance. Your surgeon may adjust recommendations based on your specific procedure and recovery.

### Activity Restrictions

First 2 weeks: Avoid lifting >10-15 lbs; avoid repetitive bending/twisting.

Weeks 2-6: Gradual increase in activity as tolerated. Avoid lifting >10-15 lbs; avoid repetitive bending/twisting.

After 6 weeks: Resume normal activity as tolerated. Increase weight 5-10 pounds every other week as tolerated.