1. YOU SHOULD TAKE COMPLETE BED REST

For acute sufferers (pain lasting a few days to a few weeks) restriction in activities for a few days may help the pain to settle down. However, enforced bed rest for more than one or two days is not recommended. For persons suffering with chronic pain (more than three months), bed rest does not provide long term relief and may actually prolong the chronicity of the pain.

2. AVOID BENDING FORWARDS

Avoiding bending and other day-to-day activities increases the disability associated with back pain. People having back pain can bend and pick up objects from the floor by bending their knees (half squat).

3. YOU SHOULD SLEEP ON A HARD SURFACE

It is advisable to sleep on a comfortable and firm mattress that supports the natural curves of the spine. Using a mattress that is either too soft or too hard will not maintain the normal curvatures of the back.

4. AVOID USING A PILLOW

People who sleep on their sides will most certainly need a pillow to maintain the alignment of the neck. However, a very thick pillow can increase neck pain by twisting the neck in the opposite direction.

5. YOU SHOULD WEAR A SPINAL BELT/CORSET

Using a belt for long periods of time can lead to the abdominal and spinal muscles becoming weak which are then unable to provide sufficient support to the spine. Back exercises strengthen muscles and support the spine are advisable.

6. TRACTION IS THE ONLY TREATMENT

Recently research has shown that traction does not provide any benefit and is without rationale. In addition, traction may also be harmful if the spine is unstable.

7. PAIN KILLERS TREAT BACK PAIN

Pain killers are useful to reduce back pain of short duration (less than a few weeks). However, long-term use of pain medications have side-effects like gastric (stomach) irritation, stomach ulcers, etc.

8. EXERCISE IS BAD FOR NECK AND BACK PAIN

Recent scientific studies have shown that passive treatments (where the therapist does all the work) like massage and electrotherapy, (TENS, ultrasound massage, Interferential Therapy, (IFT) and Short-Wave Diathermy (SWD) are not effective. Manual therapy and exercises (as taught by an exercise therapist or physiotherapist), on the other hand, are effective therapies for neck and back pain.

9. SPINE SURGERY IS DANGEROUS

In today’s age spine surgery is as safe as any other surgery. The use of modern scans, an improved understanding of spinal pathology, better surgical instruments and well-trained surgeons have improved the results of spine surgery.

10. AFTER SPINE SURGERY, ONE CAN NEVER LEAD A NORMAL LIFE

In the past, three to six months of bed rest following spine surgery was the norm. Nowadays, the duration of stay in hospital for spine surgeries varies from one to seven days and most patients are able to sit, stand and walk prior to discharge. However, bending and lifting may be delayed for a few months. The aim of surgery is to restore the patient to normalcy.