



Information on your new L.A. Scoliosis Brace

The LA Brace™ is a revolutionary new scoliosis bracing system using modern computerized modeling technology to produce a more effective and lower profile brace. It is designed to counteract the scoliotic forces to reposition your spine into a straighter alignment. The following information is provided to familiarize you with the bracing concepts and treatment program.

1. How many hours a day do I have to wear the brace for?

Unfortunately, studies have shown that part-time brace wear is not very effective. To get the best outcome from wearing the brace, you should wear the brace between 20-23 hours a day, seven days a week or as instructed by your orthopedic physician.

2. How long will I have to wear the brace?

You will usually have to wear the brace until your physician determines that growth has ended or is close to ending and the risk of progression has diminished. The actual age this occurs can vary from one person to another. By reviewing your x-rays, your physician may be able to estimate when this will be.

3. Why is the brace a “strange” shape?

The computer takes your dimensions along with measurements of your x-rays and designs a brace that will attempt to position your body in such a way as to generate the realignments needed. Hence the brace is not made to the shape of your body but to the dimensions of your body in the shape needed to get the desired results.

4. Will the brace be uncomfortable?

Because the brace is rigid and designed to be very tight fitting, initially your body will resist the pressure forces applied to it and the brace will be uncomfortable. The first week of wear is usually the worst. After that it should get progressively less uncomfortable and it will take on average 3-4 weeks for your body to fully adjust.

5. How much will it show?

The visibility of the brace will vary depending on how long you have had your brace and what type of clothing you are wearing. In the initial stages, your body will resist the pressure forces applied to it and the brace will tend to sit away from your body. Over time your body will loosen and adapt to the shape of the brace and hence the brace will fit more intimately. Looser clothing is more suitable for “hiding” the brace.

6. Wearing schedule

Your body needs time to adjust to the forces the brace is applying to it. Begin with wearing the brace for 2 hours on the first day. Increase wear time by 2 hours/day until you reach the full time wearing schedule (20-23 hours/day).

7. Tightness

For the brace to be effective it has to physically change the alignment of your spine. To do this the brace has to push on your back, ribs, hips, waist and abdomen to force your spine into a straighter alignment and then maintain this position. Your orthotist will mark the straps to guide you as to how tight the brace needs to be.

8. Follow up with your orthotist

You will need to return to see your orthotist two weeks after you receive your brace. At this point your body should have started to loosen up and the brace started to become more comfortable. At this appointment your orthotist will make the necessary adjustments to the brace to try to ensure the brace is sufficiently effective.

9. Follow up with your physician

You will usually need to return to see your orthopedist soon after your 2-week follow up with your orthotist. Your orthopedist may decide to have new x-rays taken to ensure the brace is working as intended.

10. Breathing

You may at the beginning experience a feeling of having difficulty breathing in your brace. Rest assured that this is only a temporary sensation and that the brace does not affect your ability to breath. This sensation will subside once you are up to wearing your brace full time.

11. Eating while wearing your brace

Eating a large meal while wearing the brace will be very difficult. Our recommendation is that you eat small amounts more frequently. If you do intend to eat an average to large sized meal, loosen the straps by about 1” just before you begin eating. Tighten the straps back up approx 1 hour after you finish.

12. Exercise

Wearing the brace full time, can result in developing weaker muscles in your stomach and back. It is recommended that you exercise daily in your time out of the brace. Exercises help to keep you healthy and keep your muscles strong. Exercises can also be beneficial in maximizing the effectiveness of your brace. During P.E. and sports activities you will probably need to remove the brace just before and then reapply after you finish.

13. Undershirts

You must wear an undershirt as an interface between your skin and the brace. This will improve comfort and reduce the risk of skin abrasions and sweat rashes. The shirt should ideally be cotton, tight fitting, long enough to cover the whole brace and be seamless. You can try www.Tillys.com who have a variety of suitable shirts.

14. Repairs & Maintenance

Your brace may need periodical adjustments and repairs. The required tension in the straps may result in occasional breakages in the straps, buckles or rivets. If you need repairs call your orthotist to arrange to have the repairs done promptly. In addition you may want to see your orthotist on a regular basis for review of your pressure forces to make sure the tightness and “in-brace correction” is maintained. You may also be instructed by your physician to return to see the orthotist for changes to the pressure force applications.

15. Looking after your skin

Due to the amount of pressure applied by the brace, the skin will be subject to irritation. This can be as a result of direct pressure or from friction or from sweating. Hard skin will tolerate pressure much better than soft skin. Therefore do NOT use creams, lotions or talc on your body wherever the brace applies pressure. The best solution to these problems are to change your undershirt regularly (2-3 times a day), make sure your undershirt covers the whole of your brace, is tight fitting and made of cotton and clean your brace regularly. In addition you can try applying rubbing alcohol to your skin 3 times a week (unless your skin reacts negatively) to help harden and dry your skin.

16. Cleaning your brace

Your brace should be cleaned on a regular basis. The brace should be wiped down with a damp cloth and mild detergent. The straps and pads will absorb moisture and dirt and will discolor with time. Particular attention should be paid to the pads, which will absorb perspiration and can create odor. Other patients have mentioned that alcohol swabs/wipes have been effective.

17. Where can I find out more information?

For more information go to www.TheLABrace.com. Support groups/communities can also be found on the internet. One known scoliosis support group is: www.scoliosis.org/forum.