INTRODUCTION

The Epidural Lysis of Adhesions procedure has provided significant relief for numerous individuals who cope with pain. The medical procedure performed by your doctor is just one step in the process towards pain relief. After proper diagnosis, the first stage of treatment involves site specific injection of medications through a unique, steerable catheter which calms the painful nerve by inflammation reduction and dissipation of scar tissue. Physical therapy is the next critical component to further ensure improved, lasting recovery. This pamphlet will highlight the importance of physical therapy following medical intervention and instruct you on proper technique.

Healthy nerves should move freely within the body to ensure proper blood supply, fluid exchange, and nutrition. A helpful and effective method of re-nourishment is routine stretching and exercise.

The movement of healthy nerves within the spine should not hurt, but pain is often felt when they are restricted, swollen or "angry". Nerves can become irritated and swollen when they are compressed, such as by a bulging disc or an osteophyte. Restrictions can also be caused by the presence of scar tissue. As individual nerve roots exit the vertebrae, they pass through an opening called the neuro-foramen. During movement of the lower extremity, the nerves will move slightly in and out of the foramen. When nerve movement is compromised, this normal sliding movement is no longer possible. The Lysis procedure is designed to release tension on the nerve, restore mobility and thereby reduce the radiating pain.

The following three simple exercises are designed to complement the clinical procedure. They help to regain and maintain the movement of the nerves in and out of the spinal canal. This type of exercise-induced nerve root movement is referred to as "neural flossing."

Although results may not occur immediately, the benefits of these exercises are paramount. Increased flexibility and strength may emerge after one month. It is important to perform each individual exercise, or stretch, with increasing duration from 20 to 25 to 30 seconds. The exercises should be carried out twice a day with each session lasting no longer than 3 to 5 minutes. For chronic pain sufferers, these exercises should be continued indefinitely to prevent the restriction of affected nerve roots and the resulting return of pain.

Before initiating any of the exercises, one should dress in comfortable, non-restrictive clothing. This will allow the stretching to be correctly performed and provide the patient with full benefits of the neural flossing technique. A soft yet firm surface, such as an exercise mat, will allow for a safe and comfortable experience.

It is important to note that during the exercises, the patient’s head should be flat on the floor without a pillow. Raising the head draws the spinal cord and attached nerves upward and can place a slight resistance inside the spinal canal. This resistance can further prevent the nerves from moving freely. Therefore, the three exercises are carried out in the fully flat, supine position.
Exercise 3
Similar to exercise 2, both legs are brought straight-up to a 90° position, while lying supine. Slowly spread the legs in a "V" shape, as much as is comfortably possible, and hold this position for 20 seconds. This exercise is imperative as it places the sciatic nerve along a greater arch.

About the procedure
During the Epidural Lysis of Adhesions procedure, your physician will first place a needle through the sacral canal injecting contrast to outline scarring around the pain-generating nerve root. Your physician will then introduce a steerable spring-guide catheter under x-ray control to the source of the pain. Medications are then injected to open up the affected region by the fluid pressure-volume consequence. These medications (steroid and a hyper-osmolar solution in some instances) will also calm the swollen "angry" nerve root. Patients requiring the Epidural Lysis of Adhesions procedure will often experience significant pain reduction. Pain relief is possible when nerves are less swollen or "angry," uncompressed and unrestricted. If pain returns, the Lysis procedure can be repeated within several months or later. However, the exercises detailed in this pamphlet are designed to maintain pain relief or, at least, reduce the need or frequency of repeat procedures.

Please note
Additional endurance exercises (such as walking) are beneficial. Over time, extended exercise (brisk walking with increased distance) will help to maintain muscle tone and enhance cardiovascular status.

* Consult your physician if you experience significant pain, weakness/numbness in the lower extremity, or difficulty with voiding/bowel movement during these exercises.