



EXERCISES FOR
ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS (AA)

I describe here the physical measures that may benefit AA. You don't have to do them all but select the ones you will conscientiously do every day.

Walking: AA usually involves some nerves that innervate the feet and legs. This is why so many AA patients develop partial paralysis and require a cane, walker, or wheelchair.

Walking prevents paralysis. Every AA patient must walk every day. The distance doesn't have to be further than crossing your living room. Just make sure you can honestly say "I walked at least 20 feet, 6 or more times today." Walking outside is terrific. Stop if you feel tired. Don't overdo any exercise, since you may tear open adhesions and damage cauda equina nerve roots with excessive exercise.

Water Soaking: Cauda Equina nerve roots and the arachnoid membrane are continuously soaked in spinal fluid. New spinal fluids are produced every 4 to 6 hours. Spinal fluid functions to lubricate the tissue plus bring in nutrients as well as cleanse the inflamed tissue and carry out biologic waste. Water soaking is an age-old remedy that promotes pain reduction and healing. Laying in a hot tub or putting hot, soaked towels on the lumbar spine tends to speed up spinal fluid flow. In many AA patients the tissue around the spine becomes spastic and painful. Water soaking counteracts spasms and inflammation.

Stretching and Flexing: The spinal canal is not rigid like a pipe. It's more like a garden hose. When you sit, it shrinks and folds. When you stand, you straighten out the canal and increase the flow of spinal fluid. Increased flow causes spinal fluid to move faster and carry out biologic waste. Standing also loosens the areas around the AA adhesive masses. When standing, stretch your arms straight up. This provides good spinal fluid flow.

Another simple stretch and flex exercise is to do ankle circles, flexing, and stretching. This can be done while sitting, anytime and anywhere. This measure prevents paralysis of the feet. For example, many AA patients develop a foot drop, and they may have prevented it if they had practiced flexing and stretching their feet and ankles.

Weightlifting: Obtain some light hand weights (2 to 3 pounds). Lift these overhead and to the side. The purpose is to build up the muscles and ligaments around the lumbar-sacral spine. Good muscle strength in paraspinal muscles can take a lot of pressure off of the AA adhesive masses in the spinal canal.

Deep Breathing: A deep breath that is held and slowly released helps enhance spinal fluid flow. There is no limit on how many times you should do this each day. You can't overdo deep breathing, but you can under do it. Do some deep breathing multiple times a day.

Other Acceptable Exercises: Gentle bouncing on a trampoline, stationary bike, treadmill, swimming