Thank You for Downloading:

3 Things Every Spondy Patient Needs To Know
Before We Begin

Thank you for finding SpondyInfo.com and taking the time to download our free guide titled *3 Things Every Spondy Patient Needs To Know.*

My name is Justin Adkins and I am not only a spondy sufferer, but the lead contributor to this blog and co-creator of this website.

Before we go any further, I want to tell you SpondyInfo.com is currently unlike any other site dedicated to improving life with a spondylolysis or spondylolisthesis.

My hope is that by the time you have finished reading this guide and browsing our website, you will see the challenges presented in living with a spondy as something you DO HAVE control over. I want you to develop confidence in the choices you make to improve your body.

I encourage you to take the time and read our information with the understanding that it accumulated from many years of personal learning, discussion and interaction with experts in various fields, and proven practices that have helped many other spondy patients over the years.
3 Things Every Spondy Patient Needs To Know

My Story

I was a teenager when I was diagnosed with a grade 1 spondylolisthesis (the term “spondy” will be used to describe both spondylolysis and spondylolisthesis) — and my life was completely changed.

Like you, I was frustrated, unable to relieve pain, and always searching for solutions.

My doctors provided little information and spent little time providing me with answers. To make things worse, I experienced multiple failed rehab attempts using various methods over the years. At the time, I had very few options for getting my questions answered and improving how I felt.

I honestly felt like I had no chance of improving. Surgery was slowly creeping into my mind.

I was motivated to learn more. I read books, researched rehab methods, and ultimately majored in exercise science in college with the goal of learning about the human body. I have always been passionate about how the body works and how to help others, and I put it to good use in various strength and conditioning settings.

I have now spent over 10 years in the field of strength and conditioning working as a coach. I have been able to apply what I have learned to my own situation, and in the process I began to move and feel better. Year after year, my pains that I had always attributed to my spondy were becoming less and less of a problem.

Along the way, I’ve been fortunate to work with others with pain and dysfunctions associated with a spondy, too. It didn’t take long to realize that a broad range of clients — from teenage athletes to everyday adults — were asking the same questions and reporting similar frustrations that I had experienced early on in my own struggles.

These clients came to me with the same message — they were flat out frustrated.

They had no idea how to go about improving how they were feeling. And they certainly didn’t realize that how they moved was the key to unlocking a more positive future.

Many of these clients were talking about how lost they felt. They felt they received insufficient information from their doctors. They felt their previous rehabilitation
providers were hesitant or that their programs were cookie-cutter, watered down, and ineffective. And many had admitted they had resorted to trying to piece together information on their own.

I empathized how that felt. Sometimes frustration turns into desperation, and leads to frantic searches for the magic cure.

But the reality is sobering when searching for a quick fix — there is likely no one magic pill or exercise that will provide a solution. Trying random exercises or stretches with no plan or purpose isn’t a solution for long term success. And attempting surgery without exhausting all conservative options likely won’t lead to a positive long-term solution either.

I was struck by the thought that their problems and a lack of answers was just a reflection of my early struggles. I was determined to do something about it.

I enlisted the help of the physical therapist who helped me the most in my personal recovery. We decided that we could help the most people by sharing everything we know about spondy’s and how the body works.

Put Yourself in a Position to Succeed

Our initial efforts have now evolved into SpondyInfo.com. This website is our attempt to share our combined professional knowledge and my personal experiences in order to help you find the path that leads to both moving better and feeling better!

There are two simple statements you need to understand in order to successfully find your path:
1. **Your situation is unique.** While one term (spondylolysis or spondylolisthesis) is used to diagnose your condition, the events and movement dysfunctions that led up to the injury is vastly different from one person to the next. That makes your needs different than someone else’s even though you share a common diagnosis.

2. **There is no single, set in stone path of recovery that works for everyone.** What works for someone else is not necessarily what will work for you. Remember….your situation is unique.

Write it down. Post it on the wall. It is your new mantra!

Keep these two statements in mind as you move forward. Because understanding these two statements will be very powerful for you — they will help you separate helpful information from the stuff that only leads to more frustration.

Our goal with this website is simple — we want to provide the *helpful* information, not the other stuff! We want to provide information that empowers you! We want you to succeed in meeting your goals.

Your goals should not be dismissed! In order to meet these goals, and to move better and feel better, you will need to understand how your body works AND why it’s important to find the right professional(s) to assist you. SpondyInfo.com will provide the steps necessary to put what you have learned to good use!

**The Three Core Principles**
3 Things Every Spondy Patient Needs To Know

The content on SpondyInfo.com will reflect our Three Core Principles, which we will discuss in just a moment. This is information which we feel is essential for every individual with a spondy to understand — we are convinced it will make a positive impact on your life.

I hope it becomes obvious that we are passionate about this topic. We’ve done our best to ensure all the content we post is produced with integrity and rooted in the science of musculoskeletal pain and human movement.

In addition to the Three Core Principles, we will discuss movement restrictions common to individuals with spondy’s, and we will provide information outlining which types of exercises and activities are helpful in correcting the movement restriction.

*It is important for you to realize that the exact exercise is not as important as WHY a certain exercise is used.* This will help you understand how to make variations in exercise tailored to your needs.

**Do NOT expect every example of exercise or activity to apply to you because….your situation is unique and there is no single, set in stone path of recovery that works for everyone.** See, I told you it was important! Be prepared to see that mantra over and over again!

We will continually preach the importance of understanding how your body works. We want the examples we provide to stimulate discussion between you and the rehabilitation professional(s) you are working with.

Before we move on to the Three Core Principles, we want to make two things clear.

First, *SpondyInfo.com is NOT a website with one or two exercises claiming to be a quick fix.* We don’t want to throw a couple exercises at you hoping they will work for you. Remember your mantra! Your situation is unique. There is no single, set in stone path of recovery that works for everyone.

Second, *we are NOT trying to diagnose you or provide you with specific medical advice.* We expect that if you are trying our example exercises and activities at home then you have the approval of your physician / rehabilitation professional to do so.

So let’s talk about the Three Core Principles, aka *three things every spondy patient needs to know:*

1. Knowledge of Your Condition
2. Knowledge of Human Movement
3. Responsibility to Take Action
Every article, video, and tidbit of information on SpondyInfo.com relates back to these principles. We suggest you follow the Three Core Principles to keep yourself on the path of moving and feeling better.

Core Principle #1: Knowledge of Your Condition

If you want to have control over your symptoms, it makes sense that you should have at least a basic working knowledge of your body. How can you make daily decisions to affect how you feel if you don’t understand why you are making those decisions? This includes managing choices in self-care activities, daily household activities, exercise and fitness pursuits, and sports and recreational activities.

But my interactions with clients over the years, as well as with emails from readers such as yourself, has shown that there is a lack of understanding. While it is shocking to me, it is also understandable. The fault lies partly on the medical and rehabilitation professionals for not providing more basic knowledge, and partly on the individual for not pursuing a better understanding.

I believe that if you want to start moving and feeling better, then you need to understand at least the basics about your condition. Of course, this means learning about your spondy. But it also means understanding a little about how the body works.

Remember the first statement in your mantra — your situation is unique. There is more to your condition than just labeling it a spondy.

Here are a few of the questions you should be seeking answers to so you can learn more about your spondy and your personal situation:
Do you have a spondylosis or spondylolisthesis? Remember, spondy is a general term used to characterize both a spondylolisthesis and a spondylosis. But they are very different.

Is your spondylolisthesis a grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, or grade 4?

Is it stable or unstable?

What kind of spondylolisthesis is it? Hint….there are multiple classifications to describe the origin of the spondylolisthesis.

How long have you had your spondy?

Do you have disc issues or other spine or hip problems that may be causing your pain or influencing movement dysfunctions?

What other aspects of your past medical / injury history are significant?

You should be able to answer ALL of these questions and understand what the answers mean. This will help you weigh the options pertaining to rehabilitation, choosing a professional to work with, and even if avoiding surgery is a realistic option.

Here are some examples of what I mean:

🌟 Rehab choices and the prognosis for a successful recovery may greatly differ between a spondy that is unstable versus one that is stable.

Those with grade 1 or grade 2 spondy's have a statistically higher percentage of success with resolving and managing symptoms and meeting their rehab goals with conservative (non-surgical) treatment programs than those diagnosed with grade 3 or grade 4.

🌟 Identification of an isthmic spondy may signal very different treatment approaches or modifications to activity than identification of a degenerative spondy.

All of these questions provide small pieces of information that make your spondy (and therefore your entire situation) unique.

I cannot emphasize this point enough. Your situation is very different from the next person with the same diagnosis, and it is crucial that you begin to think this way. There is no single stretch or exercise or device that will help everyone who has been diagnosed with a spondy.
And here is one more question to stir the pot….Does your pain (or other limitations) even have anything to do with your spondy? Are you 100% sure your pain is from the spond itself?

This may be one of the ultimate questions that leads you to seek more information. Your past medical history is so important in shaping your rehab process because it can shed light on your current compensations AND how to resolve them.

Learning about your condition is a great first step and important part of your recovery. Unfortunately, a majority of spondy sufferers fail to learn even the basics about their condition. Our hope is that the information and products offered on SpondyInfo.com will be useful in providing more clarity for you.

**Core Principle #2: Knowledge of Human Movement**

I’ll come back to the topic of your past medical history in just a bit. But first, I want to define human movement so we are all on the same page.

The information we provide on SpondyInfo.com looks at human movement in the following way:

*Human movement is a complex process fusing reflexive adaptations to sensory information with preset patterns of muscle activation to achieve a desired outcome.*

In other words, human movement is governed by your nervous system. The muscles are not choosing how or when to activate. They are receiving the command to activate
by your nervous system. Your muscles and bones are just vessels to carry out the patterns your brain has set.

Your brain does not think in terms of “biceps bends the elbow” or “quadriceps straightens the knee”. Your brain deals with patterns.

These patterns require regions of your body to stabilize while the desired motion is occurring, such as bending the elbow or straightening the knee. But most “functional” movements require not one, but multiple joints to move simultaneously.

And to make it even more complex, your brain is always on the lookout for the easiest way to complete the “task”, so the patterns you are using right now are the result of your past failures and successes (think about a baby learning to walk — failed attempts and successful attempts).

In a matter of milliseconds, your nervous system is fine-tuning this movement based on all the sensory information from your environment (type of surface, contact of surface, the distance from other objects, the weight of the object you are moving, etc).

YIKES, right?

So why do we think rehab should reduce all this complexity by giving all individuals with back pain the same two or three stretches to fix the problem?

I’ll say it again….your situation is unique and there is no single, set in stone path of recovery that works for everyone. The complexity of your movement system is the reason.

You are designed to adapt and compensate. Without this ability you and I would be toast.
Luckily, we don’t need to have “perfect” movement patterns (although that would be super cool!). But I fully believe you should meet a certain standard of movement.

The truth is that you and I, as individuals with a spondy, have likely spent too much time below this standard of movement.

What has contributed to this? Maybe the hours of sitting, lack of physical activity or even too much physical activity, weight gain, poor habits day in and day out, and injuries. The list could go on and on.

Let’s focus on injuries for a second. When it comes to treating your current problems, your past medical history is more influential than you may realize. Think of it as more than just a collection of past injuries. It is a timeline of incidents that create (or reshape) your body’s movement system.

It helps identify and even explain compensations of movement that may be the source of your current problem. When your body runs into a problem, such as an injury, it will try its hardest to find a way around it.

Whether pain is present or not, your brain may create movement compensations so you can complete your desired task, such as getting up from the chair, walking up the stairs, reaching across the table, kicking a soccer ball, or running 26.2 miles! It will find a way to get the job done.

But what is the cost of this compensation?

Some muscles get overworked. Some tendons, ligaments, or joint surfaces take on too much stress (or at least poorly disperse the stress). These are just some of the issues that lead to inflammation and/or pain.
Through face-to-face discussions and trading emails with individuals with spondy's, I have learned that many of them don’t understand how their movement system plays a role in their pain.

These people simply think that since they have pain and have been diagnosed with a spondy, then the pain must be from the spondy.

Luckily, that is not always the case. The more you learn about how your movement system works, the more confident you can be in finding how to help your body move and feel better.

You need to understand that a movement compensation in one area of the body can have effects in other seemingly unrelated areas of the body (this is defined as regional interdependence). That means when your back hurts, the source of the problem may not be in your back!

Your past medical history can help you uncover some of these pieces to the puzzle. And it is your history of injuries and compensations that makes your spondy situation unique!

There it is again!

*Your situation is unique*….  
*There is no single, set in stone path of recovery that works for everyone*….  

It is important for you to identify your movement flaws and how it may relate to your spondy.

If this is getting a little confusing or complex, don’t worry. We have plenty of articles, videos, and examples to help you improve your knowledge of human movement.

We even provide links and resources to help you find an expert who is dedicated to helping you discover your movement compensations and dysfunctions behind your current complaints.

*I can tell you from experience — identifying my personal movement flaws was the single most important thing that helped me in my recovery.* It was a process, and I had the help of other professionals who helped me identify the path. There was no magic exercise. There was no specific brace or device.

And as a team we have successfully used this process to identify the path for our clients and patients. We’ve also helped readers of SpondyInfo.com find the rehab professional near them who was best suited to getting them back onto their path of recovery.
I encourage you to take the time and effort to learn as much as you can about your condition. What are the details about your spondy? What is significant about your past medical history that still may be influencing your current complaints?

And learn as much about human movement as you can. Do you meet at least the minimum standard of movement? If not, what is limiting your ability to move?

You will be very happy when you take these steps. But you will need the help of qualified professionals in your area to help you.

It is your responsibility to make this happen.

The truth is your spondy is not going to heal itself. Your movement compensations are not going to magically disappear. And a surgery is no guarantee to make you move and feel better and reach your goals.

You have every right to sit on your couch and lay around and feel sorry for yourself day after day if that is what you would rather do. But if you take action and put what you have learned into motion then you can begin to move and feel better.

Which would you rather do?

If you are frustrated, tired of feeling this way, and scared about what the future holds….I get it. I have been in a similar situation. I don’t think you will find a magic pill, a magic stretch or exercise, or a magic device that will take away all of your pain and frustration in a matter of seconds. Trust me….I have looked everywhere!
Luckily, the key lies within you.

Take action and surround yourself with a positive team of professionals that will help provide the platform you need to improve.

This means finding a doctor you trust and believe in. This means finding a rehab professional (or two or three or more) who understands your goals, your issues throughout your body, and ways to improve upon them.

This also means staying positive and understanding that to improve how you move and feel, you will need to supply the hard work, motivation, and dedication.

Again, it is not as overwhelming as it sounds.

We have resources, articles, products, and information that will help point you in the right direction on our website.

We will do what we can to arm you with everything you need to move and feel better from your spondylolysis or spondylolisthesis….but it is up to YOU to take action, get motivated, and be consistent with your efforts to improve.

What’s Next?

I encourage you to re-read this guide and become more familiar with each principle and its importance in your recovery.

Again, here are the Three Core Principles:
3 Things Every Spondy Patient Needs To Know

1. Knowledge of Your Condition
2. Knowledge of Human Movement
3. Responsibility to Take Action

I firmly believe you will maximize your control over your spondy by adhering to these concepts. You need to know about your condition. You need to learn about human movement. You need to understand that it is YOUR responsibility to take action and put your newly learned knowledge to use.

Now, you may be wondering…. “What do I do next?”

At SpondyInfo.com, you will find that each blog post, article, and video is categorized into one of our Three Core Principles. This will make learning about each core principle much easier.

You can search, filter, and learn more about each principle at any time you wish. Simply visit our home page and look along the top tool bar to find the topic you want to learn more about.

Please take advantage of the information we provide. There is NO other website dedicated to spondy’s like SpondyInfo.com!

There are plenty of blog posts and other content available to you at no cost. We encourage you to participate! Be active and leave comments below each article. This is a great way for you to interact with use and other individuals with a spondy.

Ask questions. Share your thoughts. Provide other readers with your stories. The more the better!

Follow our newsletter as you will get updates on important topics, helpful articles, and helpful tips delivered right to your inbox. Keep your eyes peeled as you should be receiving some great information shortly.

You will also notice that we have additional informational products for sale on our site.

We design our products to reflect the common problems and questions that our readers have brought to us. We are always interested and listening to what you have to say!

Our goal is to provide as much detail and clarity of information as humanly possible in these products to help you navigate the sometimes uncertain path of recovery.

So take a look around SpondyInfo.com and start learning!
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Of course, we also encourage you to check us out on Facebook. If we are doing a good job in providing useful information, please give our page a Like so you can be sure not to miss out on anything.

We understand this information can be a bit overwhelming. You may be confused and have questions. If so DO NOT hesitate to contact us. If you have questions at all, do not hesitate to reach out to us at info@spondyinfo.com. We will do our best to respond in a timely manner.

Thanks again……..And best of luck in your spondy journey!