

Lateral extracavitary approach

Larson et al.¹⁾ described an aggressive lateral approach to the spine in 1976 called the “lateral extracavitary approach”.

The lateral extracavitary approach (LECA) allows for broad visualization and circumferential [spinal column reconstruction](#). However, early reports demonstrated significant complication rates, protracted operative times, and prolonged hospitalizations. More recent reports have highlighted concerns for subsidence, particularly with expandable cages.

The LECA approach for [anterior column](#) reconstruction with static or expandable cages is an important surgical consideration with favorable surgical parameters and complication rates. Further, use of expandable cages may allow for reconstruction over a larger segment without increased risk of subsidence²⁾.

However, despite certain advantages, few surgeons perform the lateral extracavitary approach. It is generally time consuming.

In particular, in the thoracic spine, the classic [lateral extracavitary approach](#) provides a generous corridor for vertebral tumor resection and subsequent central cage placement once nerve roots are sacrificed.^{3) 4)}

¹⁾
Larson SJ, Holst RA, Hemmy DC, et al. Lateral extracavitary approach to traumatic lesions of the [thoracic](#) and [lumbar spine](#). J Neurosurg. 1976;45:628-37.

²⁾
Holland CM, Bass DI, Gary MF, Howard BM, Refai D. Thoracic lateral extracavitary corpectomy for anterior column reconstruction with expandable and static titanium cages: Clinical outcomes and surgical considerations in a consecutive case series. Clin Neurol Neurosurg. 2014 Dec 6;129C:37-43. doi: 10.1016/j.clineuro.2014.11.022. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 25528373.

³⁾
Schmidt MH, Larson SJ, Maiman DJ. The lateral extracavitary approach to the thoracic and lumbar spine. Neurosurg Clin N Am. 2004;15:437-41.

⁴⁾
Snell BE, Nasr FF, Wolfla CE. Single-stage thoracolumbar vertebrectomy with circumferential reconstruction and arthrodesis: Surgical technique and results in 15 patients. Neurosurgery. 2006;58:ONS263-8. discussion ONS-269.

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Last update: **2024/06/07 02:54**

