

Surgical Approaches To Thoracic Spine

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The choice of the approach to the thoracic spine largely depends on the location of the pathology and the experience of the surgeon. The indications of these approaches include thoracic disc disease, vertebral osteomyelitis or discitis, fractures and tumors of the vertebral bodies. There are two main approaches to the thoracic spine; anterior (transthoracic) or posterior approaches. Each of the approaches has its own advantages and disadvantages that must be considered during the evaluation. A transthoracic approach provides exposure of anterior portions of vertebral bodies from T2-T12. Among the advantages of this approach are: it provides an excellent correction of thoracic scoliosis and better control of radicular vessels. However, at T10-L1 level, this approach may require mobilization of diaphragm which may increase morbidity. The posterior approach is relatively straightforward and does not require one lung deflation.