

## Realigning the spine

These dramatic procedures are challenging but safe, according to Lawrence G. Lenke, MD, who has performed more than 70 posterior vertebral column resections. The 10-hour operation proceeds in stages.

- 1 First, the misshapen spine is exposed.
- 2 Screws and rods are implanted to strengthen the patient's spine, which is now "disconnected." One or more vertebrae are removed to facilitate the realignment.
- 3 Gradually the spine is reformed into the most healthful posture possible. A cage is placed in front of the spinal cord as a replacement for the excised vertebra to support the spinal column.