

Post-operative shoulder advice and exercises

Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who have had shoulder surgery. You may have some restriction of movement. Your therapist will highlight what your restrictions or your safe zones are, if it has been advised by your consultant.

What is this leaflet about?

This information leaflet has been written to help you manage your recovery, at home following your surgery. An appointment will also be arranged for you to see a physiotherapist.

What are the side effects of surgery?

Effects of anaesthetic

You may experience nausea and dizziness following a general anaesthetic. A nerve block may be used during the surgery. This means that immediately after the operation the shoulder and arm often feels completely numb. This may last up to 72 hours following your operation.

Pain and stiffness:

Discomfort following surgery is common; please ensure you have adequate pain relief. Regular pain relief can improve comfort and reduce muscle spasms. If your pain is well controlled you will manage exercises more easily which will aid recovery.

Swelling:

Swelling of the shoulder and elbow joint down to your fingers is common after surgery but is usually short term.

Ice Therapy:

Ice packs can be used to reduce swelling and control pain. Wrap frozen peas or crushed ice in a damp, cold cloth and place on the shoulder for up to 20 minutes. This can be repeated every hour.

Keep the wound and dressing dry.

Do not use ice if the area is numb, you have weeping or bleeding wounds, you are a diabetic, or have problems with your circulation.

If you have a burning sensation or notice any blistering, remove ice immediately.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Why do I need to wear a sling?

You may be provided with a sling to support the arm. Wearing the sling will protect the healing tissues and minimise your pain following surgery. The operated arm should be allowed to 'rest' in the sling. Your physiotherapist will advise you how long you need to wear this for. During this time the sling can be removed for washing, dressing, and exercise. Whilst the arm is in the sling no weight should be placed in the hand. You may need to wear the sling at night, and you will be unable to drive.

The application, removal and positioning of your sling will be demonstrated to you by your physiotherapist. Have your elbow at least at a right angle. This will help control swelling.

While you are wearing a sling it is important to loosen or release the sling regularly to move your elbow, wrist and hand to prevent stiffness at these joints. This should be done at least 4 times a day.



☐ You do not need to wear a sling

You should wear sling for:

☐ 2 weeks

☐ 4 weeks

☐ 6 weeks

☐ Wear wearing sling as soon as possible

How should I dress myself?

Try to wear clothes that are loose or front opening, such as shirts and cardigans. Always dress your operated arm first. Elastic waist pants or jogging bottoms are easier to put on compared to bottoms with zips and buttons.

Wear clothing under your sling to allow you to remove your sling easily for exercises

Women may find wearing a soft elastic crop top bra which they can pull up over their hips more comfortable. You may feel more appropriately dressed when exercising or attending hospital for doctors or physio appointments.

What is the best position to rest and sleep in?

If you are sitting it may be helpful to place a pillow under the arm for added support. Sit up straight with your shoulders back and your chin tucked in. Your spine should be sitting upright in a S shape not slouched down into a C shape.



You will find it more comfortable to sleep on your back or in a semi-upright sitting position. Try to wear the sling in bed for the first few weeks. Wearing the sling at night and placing pillows under your operated arm will support your shoulder and hold it in a good position. You may have to wear your sling in bed for up to 6 weeks. Ask your physiotherapist or consultant when you can start sleeping without your sling. It may take several weeks, for it to become comfortable, to lie on the side of your operated shoulder.

What about going up and down stairs?

The banister should be held with your un-operated arm only. This may mean that a second banister may be required, or your therapist may show you how to step sideways down each step holding the rail. Do not use your elbow on your operated side for support against the wall.

When can I use the bath or shower?

You will be required to keep your wound dry for 2 weeks whilst your wound is healing. Be mindful not to get the dressing wet.

Underarm hygiene is important as it will help prevent infection.

To wash your under arm: place your operated hand on a bathroom sink and step back. This should create a gap under your arm to allow washing whilst keeping your operated arm supported.

You may need assistance to wash your un-operated arm, as you will not be able to use your operated arm for this.

Please remember to keep the surgical wounds dry and protected whilst washing. Waterproof dressings may be provided by the hospital to wear when you are washing, alternatively these can be bought from a chemist.

Can I drive?

Your doctor or physiotherapist will advise you when it is safe to return to driving. You must be safe and in full control of the vehicle before attempting to drive again. You should not drive whilst wearing a cast, brace, or sling.

Will I have physiotherapy following my operation?

Before leaving hospital a member of the physiotherapy team will explain what exercises you should do and how often you should do them. You will then be referred for follow up physiotherapy in an outpatient physiotherapy clinic.

Your physiotherapist will advise you on when you can return to certain activities. Such as housework, work and sports.





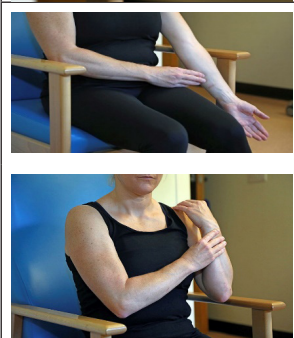
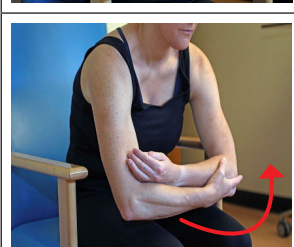
You may be provided with a follow up consultant or specialist physiotherapist clinic appointment in 6-12 weeks.






Is exercise helpful after surgery?

Early exercise can have a positive influence on tissue healing and reduce the potential for joint and soft tissue stiffness.

It is important to start these exercises as soon as your movement and feeling has returned to your operated arm. Only complete the exercises advised to you by your physiotherapist, as the wrong type of exercise may be harmful to tissue healing and may cause inflammation and increase your pain.

Exercises as demonstrated by your Physiotherapist - to be completed 3 to 4 times daily.

	Make a fist.
	Straighten your fingers. Repeat 10 times.
	Sitting or standing with your forearm supported in the sling or removed from the sling with your forearm supported on the arm of the chair or on the edge of a table. Move your wrist and fingers towards the floor.
	Then move wrist backwards towards you. Repeat 10 times.
	Sitting or standing. Hold and support the wrist of the operated arm. Gently straighten and bend your elbow with your supporting hand. Repeat 10 times.
 <p>Flexion</p>	<p>Sitting in a chair or standing. Leaning forward supporting your operated arm. Gently 'rock the baby' forwards and back, assisting the movement with your other hand, until you feel a gentle stretch in your shoulder. Repeat 5-10 times</p> <p>Safe Zones (if specified by your consultant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexion: _____ • Abduction: _____ • External Rotation: _____

	<p>Sitting in a chair or standing. Leaning forward support your operated arm and gently 'rock the baby' towards your operated side and back (side to side). Lift your operated arm to the side. Return to the starting position Repeat 5-10 times. Safe Zones (if specified by your consultant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexion: _____ • Abduction: _____ • External Rotation: _____
	<p>In sitting or standing turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10 seconds and then repeat on the other side. Repeat 5 times.</p>
	<p>In sitting or standing tilt your head toward the one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side. Hold approx. 10 seconds. Repeat to the other side. Repeat 5 times</p>
	<p>In standing or sitting with your back away from the back of the chair, pinch your shoulder blades together. Hold for 10 seconds Repeat 5 times.</p>
	<p>In sitting or standing, pull your chin in, keeping your neck and back straight. Try not to tip your head forwards. Hold for 10 seconds at the end position and feel the stretch at the back of your neck. Repeat 5 times</p>

Who can I contact if I have any queries or questions about the information in this leaflet?

If you have any queries or concerns about the information given to you by your physiotherapist please contact a member of Therapy Services staff on the following numbers:

New Cross Hospital 01902 695596

Cannock Chase Hospital 01543 576590

If you have any medical concerns regarding wound care, dressings or slings please contact the Back In Trouble Clinic on 01902 695380

These numbers are available during normal working hours Monday to Friday, 8:30am until 4:00pm

If you require advice outside of these hours, please contact the ward from which you were discharged.

If you have not been contacted by the therapy department within a week of your procedure, please contact your discharging hospital so that on-going physiotherapy can be arranged.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。