

## Rugby St Cross: Orthopaedic Physiotherapy

### Shoulder Stabilisation



**This advice sheet is for patients following shoulder stabilisation surgery. This may be done as a keyhole procedure or an open procedure.**

#### **What to expect afterwards**

You will need to rest until the effects of the anaesthetic have passed. After an anaesthetic it may take several hours before the feeling comes back into the operated arm. You will be required to wear a sling 24 hours a day to immobilise your shoulder.

#### **Pain relief**

You will be given pain killers after the operation. Please take them as you are advised. You may have some discomfort for several weeks after the surgery but taking your painkillers regularly for the first few weeks will make you feel more comfortable and enable you to do your exercises.



## Patient Information

### Swelling

You can expect some swelling to last for several weeks after surgery. When at home wrap frozen peas or crushed ice in a dry cloth and place on your shoulder for up to 20 minutes. Use it at least 3 times per day, although there must be at least an hour between applications.

### Sling

You will return from theatre wearing a sling. This should be **worn at all times**, including at night, and **should not be discarded** until advised by your physiotherapist, normally after 5 weeks.

### Exercises

The success of your operation will often depend on the amount of effort you are prepared to put into your rehabilitation.

Although your shoulder may be sore after the operation it is vital that you start these initial exercises to ensure that you progress as expected.

It is essential that you complete these exercises **3 times daily**. You may find it is helpful to coincide the exercises with when you are having a wash and getting dressed as the sling will have to be removed for these activities too.

Before being discharged you will be seen by the physiotherapist who will give advice and explain the exercises you need to do.

You may experience discomfort when doing these exercises, this is normal. If, however, you feel a sharp pain, stop and try again later.

### Postural Awareness

Although wearing a sling, please try to observe an upright posture. **Sit up tall, don't slouch!**

### Neck exercises

Look up and down, look left and right, bend ear to shoulder on both sides.

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### Elbow exercises

Take your arm out of the sling, straighten your elbow fully, and then bend fully.



Turn your hand over as far as it can go, then back the other way.



### Wrist/hand exercises

Bend your wrist up and down and wriggle your fingers.

### Pendular hang

With the sling taken off, stand up, support yourself on the arm of a chair or a table and bend over slightly. Allow the operated arm to hang down under the effect of gravity to facilitate hygiene needs.



**It is important that you do not swing your arm; just let it hang.**

**It is essential that you wear your sling at all times and only complete the exercises taught to you in order to allow the repair to heal. Failure to follow these precautions could result in rupture of the repair and further surgery.**

### **Fitting your sling**

#### **How to put the sling on by yourself**

1. Hold onto hand grips and slide your elbow into the sling ensuring the elbow is in the corner.
2. Bring the long strap around your back and over your opposite shoulder.
3. Feed the front strap (with the Velcro) through the rectangular loop and attach the Velcro (ensuring your arm is in a horizontal position).
4. Bring the strap with the clip, under your armpit and clip in the triangular hole. You can attach the clip near to you hand or higher up (above the Velcro is also a small triangle) use the clip that your physiotherapist has showed you

### **How to take the sling off by yourself**

#### **To do your exercises**

1. Undo the Velcro strap that says AIRCAST
2. This will allow you to remove your arm but leave the sling attached to your body
3. To put it back on , slide your arm back into the sling ensuring your elbow is in the corner and then do you the AIRCAST Velcro strap

#### **To wash and dress**

1. Unclip the clip at the front (in the triangular hole).
2. Undo the Velcro on the front shoulder strap and feed it back on itself through the loop.
3. Remove the sling from your elbow.

### **Discharge**

You should be able to go home the same day as your operation, but may be in hospital overnight. You will need to arrange for someone to drive you

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home. You should try to have a friend or relative stay with you for the first 24 hours.

Stitches (if you have them) will be removed between 10 to 14 days after surgery, according to how quickly the wound heals.

**Please contact the fracture clinic (through the switchboard 024 7696 4000) if the wound:**

- Becomes red or inflamed
- Begins to ooze or discharge
- Bleeds or the discharge smells

You will be contacted with an outpatient physiotherapy appointment 10 to 14 days after your surgery. If you have not heard from outpatient physiotherapy within a week please contact the department.

**If you have any queries or concerns please contact:**

Rugby Physiotherapy Orthopaedic Department Telephone: 01788 663054  
University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire Telephone: 024 7696 5046

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact your physiotherapy department and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Document History

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