

Patient information

Humeral open reduction internal fixation (ORIF)

Physiotherapy advice for patients after surgery

This booklet will provide you with physiotherapy advice to help your rehabilitation. It is a guide only and the therapy you need may vary. Physiotherapy aims to improve movement, function and strength in your limbs following your surgery. You have a very important role in your own recovery, so it is important that you follow the advice we give you.

There are many different ways to fix a fracture in the humerus (the upper arm bone). Internal fixation is usually used for more serious and complex fractures where the bone would otherwise not heal correctly, unless fixed with metalwork.

Once your surgery has been completed, you will have a period of time where you are not moving the limb. This length of time will be determined by your orthopaedic consultant.

Your post-operative instructions

Weight-bearing status

Polysling

Restrictions

Your consultant is:

Other.....

Polysling

When you return from theatre following your surgery, your arm will be in a polysling.

This is to support the weight of your arm and help alleviate any discomfort you may have.

You will need to wear your sling for the time period in which the consultant specifies, which your Physiotherapist will give your further guidance on.



You may remove your sling when sitting down or when in bed. Place pillows under your arm to support the weight of it, provide comfort and help alleviate any discomfort you may have.

When you are in bed, having your hand above your shoulder can reduce swelling, you can achieve this by placing pillows under your whole arm.

You may remove your sling during the day for tasks such as washing your face, cleaning your teeth, eating, drinking and writing.

You will need to remove your sling when you are completing your exercises.

Putting on and removing your polysling

When putting your sling on, your arm should be across your body, as the picture above demonstrates

Putting your sling on:

1. In sitting (either bed or chair), place your arm on a pillow for support
2. Put the sling on your arm ensuring your elbow is back in the sling as far as it will go
3. Velcro the strap across your forearm
4. Ensure the strap from the elbow is across your back and over your shoulder and not pulling on your neck
5. Clip the buckle or Velcro together at the front of the sling at the wrist

Taking your sling off:

1. In sitting (either bed or chair), place your arm on a pillow for support
2. Unclip the buckle or Velcro at the wrist, removing the shoulder strap
3. Undo the Velcro strap across your forearm

4. Slowly slide the sling downwards pushing into the pillows, removing it from your arm

Pain control

- A nerve block may be used during your surgery, this means that immediately after the surgery, your arm will feel numb for a few hours
- It is expected that you experience some pain or discomfort following your surgery.
- It is essential your pain is well controlled at all times: when you are lying or sitting still, moving in the bed, getting out of the bed and especially while walking.
- If your pain relief is making you feel sick or unwell, please let the nurses know.
- If you feel your pain is going to stop you doing an activity or a movement, you need to ask the nursing staff for pain relief.

It is important your pain is well controlled to allow you to engage in therapy

Ice therapy

- Ice is beneficial for temporary pain relief and for the management of swelling.
- It can help reduce inflammation which can cause pain.
- You can apply ice to the area of your surgery for 20mins, ensuring it is wrapped in a damp towel.
- Look after your skin when using ice. If it remains red and sore following ice therapy, seek medical advice.

Washing and dressing

You must not bath or shower for the first two weeks following your surgery and will need to strip wash. You can do this at the sink in your bathroom. This is to keep the dressing and the wound dry and reduce chance of infection.

You may find it difficult to wash under your arms. A good technique to use, is to lean forward letting your arm hang down (towards the floor). You can now wash your underarm without actively moving the arm at the shoulder.

You may need some assistance to wash your back. It is advisable to organise help from family or friends to support with this.

When getting dressed, it is advisable to have loose clothing. Lead with your operated limb followed by your non-operated limb. When undressing, lead with your non-operated limb, followed by your operated limb.

If you struggle with this, our occupational therapy team can discuss discharge options with you before you go home.

The wound

The nursing staff will provide you with the information you require to look after your wound.

It is important to keep the wound dry until it is well healed and leave the dressing in place.

If your dressing starts to come away, once you are home, please contact your GP as this should be re-dressed for reducing infection.

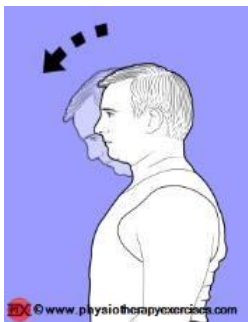
Exercises

You play a very important role in your own recovery, so it is important that you do all the exercises and follow the advice we give you. If at any time during your rehabilitation you have difficulty following our advice or exercises, please contact the team.

You should commence your exercises when you return from your operation and complete them as prescribed: 10 repetitions, three times a day for the first two weeks or until you are reviewed by the physiotherapist in an outpatient setting reviews you.

The exercises should be completed in a smooth and controlled manner. Stop the exercise if you feel unable to complete it safely. You should stop exercising if you have increased pain not eased by rest / pain relief or ice therapy and seek medical advice.

Neck flexion

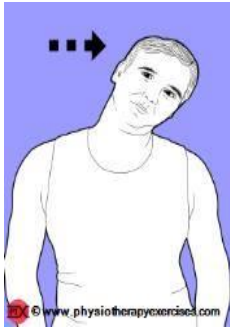


In sitting

Gently drop your chin to your chest, bring your head up and look up

Repeat 10 times

Neck lateral flexion

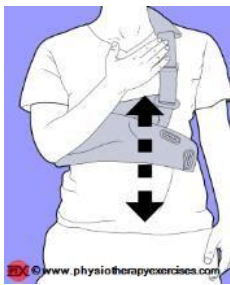


In sitting

Flex your head from side to side, slowly and gently

Repeat 10 times each way

Elbow flexion and extension (remove sling)



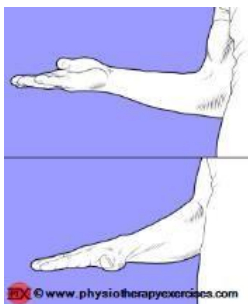
In sitting

Remove your sling as you have been advised

Bend and straighten your elbow as much as you can

Repeat 10 times

Palm up, palm down



In sitting

You may keep your sling on for this exercise if you would like.

Rotate your forearm so that your palm is facing upwards, then facing down

Repeat 10 times

Shoulder flex – use a duster on the table, no loading through the arm



Sitting at a table, using a duster / cloth, to move your arms forward, stretching through your elbow as far as you are able to.

****You are not leaning on the table or putting weight through the arm****

Return to starting position

Repeat 10 times

Pendular



Standing with support of the kitchen counter

Remove your arm from your sling and let your arm naturally hang down by your side

Leaning forward slightly, letting your arm continue to hang down to the floor, gently move your arm forward and back and in small circles

Repeat 20 times for each movement

Active assisted shoulder flexion 90 degrees



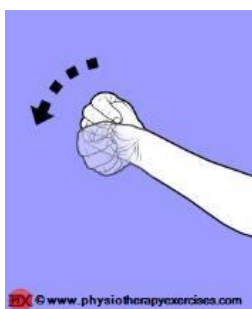
Lying in bed

Clasp your fingers together or hold on to a towel

Slowly and gently lift your arms up, aiming to get your hands no further than shoulder height (as picture demonstrates)

Slowly lower back to starting position

Wrist flexion and extension



In sitting

You may keep your sling on for this exercise

Gently flex and extend through your wrist

Repeat 10 times

Finger / thumb opposition



In sitting, you may keep your sling on for this exercise

Touch the tip of your finger with your thumb, moving through all fingers

Repeat 5 times backwards and forwards

Grip strength exercise



Holding on to a sponge / flannel
Squeeze as hard as you can and then let go
Repeat 10 times

Useful contact numbers

Ward F4 (elective ward)	01284 713290
Day Surgery Unit	01284 713050
Main hospital switchboard	01284 713000
Surgical care practitioner helpline	01284 713924
Orthopaedic physiotherapy department	01284 713570

You can contact your consultant via the hospital switchboard if required.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



© West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust