SPORTS MEDICINE ASSOCIATES
Any Athlete. Any Injury. Anytime.®

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💪 Your Shoulder Replacement Recovery Guide

🌞 Welcome to the Healing Phase!

You did it — surgery is behind you! 🎉 Now it's time to focus on getting strong, steady, and comfortable again. This guide is here to help you *heal smartly* and *feel good* while you recover. If you're ever unsure about something, reach out — we've got your back (and your shoulder 😉).

💥 What's Normal After Surgery

Don't panic if you feel a few of these things — they're *signs your body is healing!*

- Mild pain or soreness around the incision
- A little redness or puffiness (it should fade soon)
- A sore throat or raspy voice from the breathing tube
- Itching near your incision (yes, it's annoying — but normal!)
- Pain around **3–6/10** with medication
- Some stiffness when standing up or moving

🕓 Each day gets better — be patient with yourself!

💊 Your Med Buddy Lineup

Here's what each prescription is doing for your comfort squad:

Medication	Why You Have It 💡
Hydrocodone	Pain control — use as needed, then taper off
Colace	Keeps things moving (pain meds can cause constipation!)
Mobic	Fights inflammation + swelling
Gabapentin	Soothes nerve pain without the grogginess
Zofran	Stops nausea before it starts
Aspirin	Helps prevent blood clots

💧 **Pro Tip:** Stay hydrated, take short walks, and eat fiber — it's the magic combo for recovery.

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🩹 Incision TLC

Your incision is sealed with surgical glue (Dermabond) — it'll flake off in about **2–3 weeks**.
Here's how to keep things looking and feeling good:

- Keep dressing on until your **first post-op visit (10–14 days)**.
- Shower after **3 days**, but no soaking — that means **no baths, pools, or hot tubs!**
- Use gentle, fragrance-free soap (like Dial).
- No ointments, creams, or scrubbing the incision.
- See a little clear stitch poking out? Don't pull it — we'll handle it later.

💜 **If the tape itches or blisters, call us and send our email a pic so we can better asses.**

🚶‍♀️ Move Smart, Heal Fast

The key? Gentle motion + patience = Road to recovery.
Think of the first week as your "VIP rest and recharge" time.

✅ **DO:**

- Wear your sling 24/7 (except for showering, dressing, or exercises).
- Take short walks a few times a day.
- Sleep how ever feels best — back, side, recliner, whatever helps you rest.
- Keep spirits up — recovery is a team effort!

🚫 **DON'T:**

- Drive for at least 2 weeks (and not while on pain meds).
- Push through sharp pain — it's your body saying, "not yet!"
- Sit or stand still for more than 50 minutes at a time.

💡 *Small, frequent movement beats long marathons every time!*

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🧊 Cool It — Literally

Ice is your new BFF. It helps swelling and soreness.

- Wrap your ice pack in a towel (no direct skin contact).
- Ice for **20–30 minutes**, **4 times a day**.
- Too much cold = more pain — 30 minutes max per session!

💩 Let's Keep Things Moving

Constipation can happen thanks to pain meds. Here's how to outsmart it:

🍎 Eat fruit, veggies, and fiber
💧 Drink lots of water
🚶 Take gentle walks
💊 Use Colace daily while on pain meds
⏰ No bowel movement after 3 days? Try **Miralax** or **Milk of Magnesia**

🚨 When to Call Us

Reach out right away if you notice:

- Worsening redness, swelling, or heat near the incision
- Drainage (especially yellow, green, or smelly)
- The incision edges separating
- Fever above **101.5°F**
- New bruising or pain that's suddenly worse

  💌 Email usually gets the fastest response!

🚑 Call 911 or Go to the ER If:

- You have trouble breathing or chest pain
- You develop a severe headache
- Your calf feels tight, swollen, or painful

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💃 Shoulder Exercises (3x per Day)

Keep your shoulder happy and loose with these simple moves.
Do **10–15 reps**, **3 sessions a day** — and stop if anything hurts.

🖐️ 1. Wrist Flexion & Extension

Bend your wrist forward and backward like you're waving hello.

💪 2. Elbow Flexion & Extension

Bend, hold for 5 seconds, then straighten.
🚫 Skip this one if you had a *biceps tenodesis*.

🔄 3. Pendulum Circles

Lean forward and let your arm hang. Gently swing in small circles — clockwise, then counterclockwise.

↔️ 4. Side-to-Side Swings

Rock your body weight side to side so your arm gently swings.
Try palm-up, down, or thumb-up — whatever feels best.

🌈 Final Thoughts

Healing is a journey, not a race.
Take it slow, celebrate every tiny win (like brushing your hair one-handed!), and know that progress — even small — is still progress.

You've got this, and we're cheering for you every step of the way. 💪💖

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SHOULDER POST OPERATIVE EXERCISES

WRIST FLEXION / EXTENSION



Actively bend wrist forward.
Then backwards as far as you can.
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day.

ELBOW FLEXION / EXTENSION



With palm either UP, DOWN, or THUMBSIDE UP
gently bend elbow as far as possible.
Hold for 5 seconds.
Then straighten arm as far as possible.
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day.
****DO NOT PERFORM THIS EXERCISE IF BICEP TENODESIS WAS PERFORMED****

PENDULUM SWINGS

(Clockwise/counterclockwise)



Let arm move in a clockwise circle,
then counterclockwise by rocking body
weight in a circular pattern.
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day

PENDULUM SWINGS

(Side to side)



Gently move arm from side to side
by rocking body weight from side to side.
Let arm swing freely.
Repeat 10-15 times. Do 3 sessions per day

Day 1 to week 6 (stage 1)

What to expect

The pain is often worse at night, especially the first few nights.

Don't forget to use ice and your pain medication.

Some patients find it more comfortable to sleep a little more vertical, for instance in a recliner.

An increase in body temperature is common following an operation.

Don't forget to wear the sling when you are up and about, and to rest your arm on a pillow or arm rest when you are sitting quietly.

Your wound is cover by a waterproof dressing, you can shower normally.

Your first post-operative appointment should be on week 2. We will remove the dressing and review the operation with you.

You will not be able to drive until the sling is off and you can lift your arm comfortably shoulder height (8 weeks).

No lifting or overhead work

Start the following exercises

Some gentle exercises are outlined below. During these exercises, there is to be NO ACTIVE MOVEMENT of the operated arm. You are to use your opposite arm to assist with movements, or allow gravity to move your body into position for exercises such as the pendulum.

- *Do each exercise the number of times recommended.*
- *All exercises should be done 3 to 5 times a day as your pain allows.*
- *Absolutely NO lifting.*
- *Avoid too much early active use.*

1. Bend and straighten elbow

Use your opposite arm to assist with the movement of the affected arm initially.
REPEAT 10 times



2. Passive Shoulder Flexion



Place hands on top of a bench or chair at waist height.
Step backwards, keeping the arms straight.
Bend from the hips and lower your trunk between your arms.
You should feel a stretch in your shoulder.
Hold gently for 10-15 seconds.
REPEAT 5 times

3. Hand Squeeze



The hand squeeze exercise will improve your hand strength.
Squeeze the fingers of your hand in towards your palm.
Hold for 5-10 seconds, then release.
You can use a squeeze ball if you have one available, but it is not necessary.
REPEAT 10 times

4. Neck Stretch



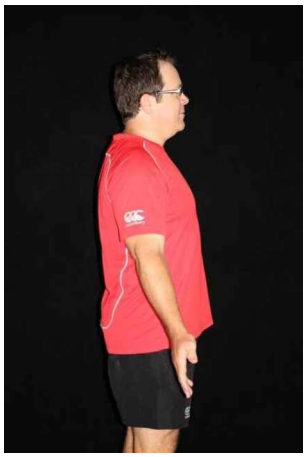
Gently stretch your neck from side to side.
REPEAT as required

5. Passive Pendulum



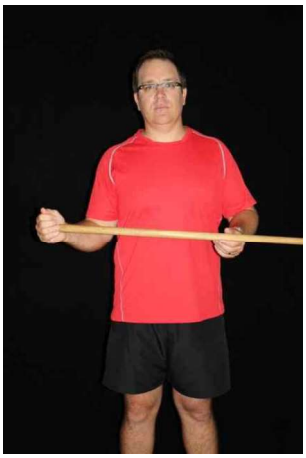
Gently let the affected arm fall away from your body as you slowly bend forward from the hips.
Aim for a **90 degree** angle between your body and your arm.
Hold this position for 10 seconds.
REPEAT 5 times

6. Passive External Rotation



Stand with your affected arm up against a door jamb.
Assist your elbow to bend to 90 degrees and keep your arm resting across the front of your waist (just as if it was in the sling).
Using a stick or your other hand, push your affected arm away from your body until you get a stretch.
Hold gently at this point for 5-10 seconds.
REPEAT 5 times

7. Posture



When you no longer need to wear your sling, it is important to stretch your back and shoulders to regain your pre surgery posture.
Posture is important especially for a good functioning shoulder.
Gently roll your shoulders a few times and squeeze your shoulder blades together.
Gently hold this position for 10 seconds.
REPEAT 5 times

Week 6 – 12

What to expect

You can stop wearing the sling after.

You can book your first physiotherapist appointment.

Your second post-operative appointment will be around week 8-10

No overhead activities

You can lift up to 1kg to your waist.

You can drive when you are able to lift your arm shoulder high (around week 8)

Start the following exercises after second post-op appointment

All exercises should be done 3 times a day

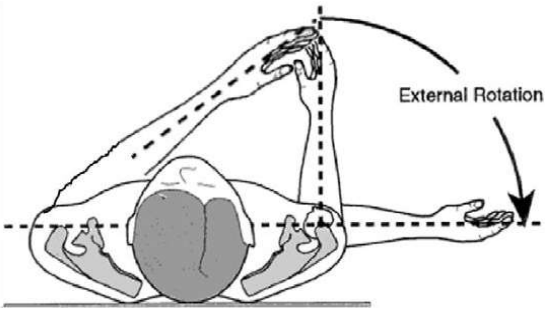


1. Flexion stretch

Slide both arms up a wall with palm facing towards you. Move closer to the wall as the arms slide upwards.

5 Repetitions

2. Active supported external rotation

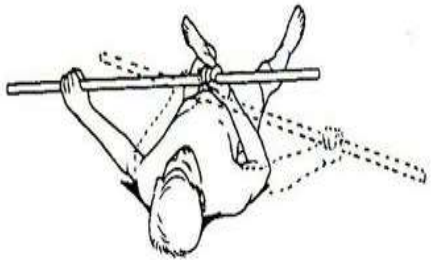


Sit at a table with the elbows bent at 90º, by your side and sup- ported on top of the table.

Keeping your shoulder blades still, slide the operated side fore- arm so that it swings outwards, away from your body.

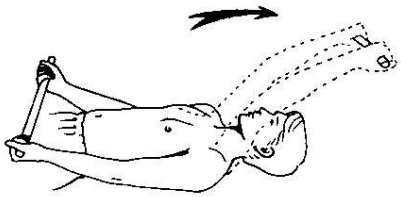
10 Repetitions

3. External-internal rotation



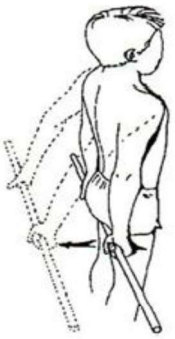
Lay down on your back.Hold stick with good handin under grip andoperated hand in a top grip, elbows bent at 90°.
Usingyourgoodhandgentlypushthesticktowards the operated side ofyour body, making sureyou keep the elbow ofyour bad arm by your side.
10 Repetitions

4. Shoulder flexion



Lie down on your back.
Take hold of a stick with both hands placed wider thanshoulder width apart.
Lift your arms above your head until you feel a stretch, use your good armto movethe operatedarm.
Gently hold at this point for 10 seconds.
10 Repetitions

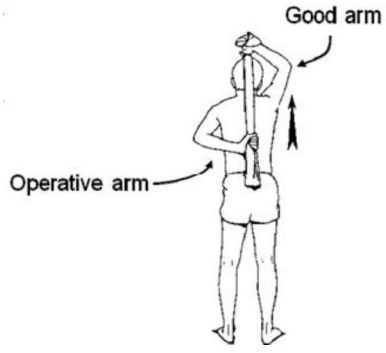
5. Shoulder extension



Hold the stick using an underhand grip behind your back.

Push the stick backwards away from your back. **10 Repetitions**

6. Back towel stretch



Grasp towel in both hands.
Place operated arm behind back and use the unaffected arm to pull up the one that has had surgery. **10 Repetitions**

Week 6 – 3 months phase 2- Isometric strengthening exercises

- All pushes should be gentle. Don't push through pain. Follow your physiotherapist recommendations.
- 10 repetitions of each, 3 times a day

1. Isometric flexion

With your forearm in front of you, pull the operated hand towards your head against the good hand which is kept still, providing resistance.



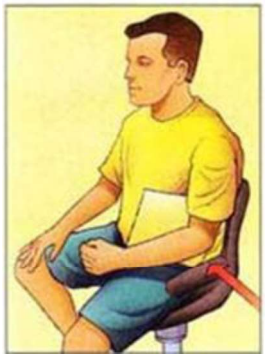
2. Isometric Extension

Push your elbow and arm back into the wall.



3. Isometric adduction

Squeeze a pillow into your body with the elbow and arm. Keep the neck relax and the shoulder blades pinched together.



4. Isometric External Rotation

Keeping your elbow by your side, press your forearm so that it swings outwards in the direction of the wall.



3 months – 6 months (stage 3)

What to expect

You can commence light lifting gradually up to 5-10kg.

You can start occasional overhead work of less than 15 minutes duration.

You can commence Stage 3 exercises.

Theraband exercises

Perform theraband exercises in series of ten 3 times (30times), twice a day.

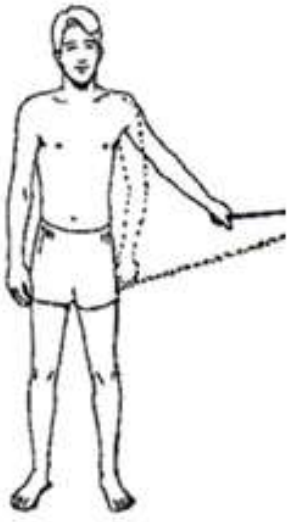
1. Theraband rowing

Hold each end of the theraband. Pull both arms back in a rowing motion. Keep your elbows bent; pinch shoulder blades together as you pull back- wards.



2. Theraband resistance adduction

Pull the theraband down towards your body.



Repeat, but pull the theraband away from y



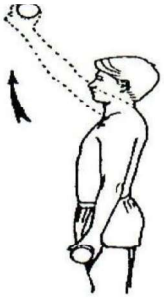
3. Theraband resistance internal and external rotation

With elbow at your side, Pull the theraband inwards towards the front of your body.



4. Straight arm lifts

Lift your operated arm forward up towards the ceiling. Keep your elbow straight and thumb facing up**.** When you are able to do this, you can add weights.



Milestones

Return to full duties work at 6 - 9 months.