



## SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY: INITIAL REHABILITATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROCEDURE: \_\_\_\_\_

This handout describes details of the early post-operative care of your shoulder. The rehabilitation of your shoulder after surgery is essential for the success of your treatment. Your surgeon and physiotherapist will advise you on the specifics of your rehabilitation, but the ultimate responsibility to exercise consistently is yours.

The main goals of rehabilitation in the first two weeks are:

1. Control pain and inflammation
2. Allow the surgical wounds to heal properly
3. Commence passive exercises to minimize the side effects of immobilization

## CONTROL OF PAIN AND INFLAMMATION

During the early post-op period, you will experience some discomfort in your shoulder. To control the pain and inflammation:

If you wish, you can use an ice pack, or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel, placed over the front of the hip for 15 minutes each hour or so to help with your discomfort. After first few days, the frequency of icing can be reduced to every 2-3 hours or so

You will receive a prescription for pain relief prior to discharge from hospital. As the local anaesthetic starts to wear off, start taking the pain-killers. Don't wait until the pain is really severe to take pain relief. It is easier to keep pain under control, than to get it back under control once it is severe.

## POST-OPERATIVE WOUND CARE

The outer dressing can be removed 2 days after your surgery.

The inner dressing can be left undisturbed until being seen in the 1<sup>st</sup> post-operative clinic. The inner dressing is waterproof and may be gently showered over, then patted dry from 3 days after surgery.

There may be visible suture ends from the wound. These are the ends of the dissolvable sutures, which will be trimmed off at your follow up appointment.

Ensure you keep your armpit clean.

Your next clinic appointment is:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact the clinic if you have a significant amount of **ongoing oozing** or **bleeding** after the first 24h, or if you have **worsening swelling and pain** in spite of resting, taking your painkillers and decreasing exercise intensity.



### SLEEPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Wear your sling /brace while sleeping until you are seen at a follow up clinic unless otherwise instructed. Sleeping discomfort can be reduced by sleeping on your unaffected side with a pillow between your knees. If you are not required to wear a brace full time, place one or two pillows between your forearm and your body to help support your arm.



### MOBILIZATION EXERCISES

After surgery, your shoulder can quickly become weak and stiff. It is important that you start gentle arm mobility exercises on the first day after surgery. The following exercises are intended to initiate gentle and safe shoulder movements.

Do your exercises at least 2 times daily.

Your exercise program is customised depending on your specific surgery, pain or stiffness. The specific exercises you should do are indicated below, and described in the following pages.

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Neck and shoulder blade exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Elbow exercises:                  |                          |
| Normal protocol                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| SLAP or tenodesis protocol           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Wrist and hand exercises          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. External rotation                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Pendulums                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Forward flexion                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Stretching protocol               | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you are to perform a stretching or active motion protocol, this is detailed in a separate rehabilitation guide, which you will be given prior to discharge home from surgery.

Contact the clinic if you have a significant amount of **ongoing oozing** or bleeding after the first 24h, or if you have **worsening swelling and pain** in spite of resting, taking your painkillers and decreasing exercise intensity.



## 1. Neck and shoulder blade exercises

Maintain a full range of neck movement (ROM) in each direction. Tilting back to the ceiling, then chin down onto chest. Rotating your neck in left and right, tilting sideways to bring your ear down to the shoulder on each side.

### *Shoulder blade motion*

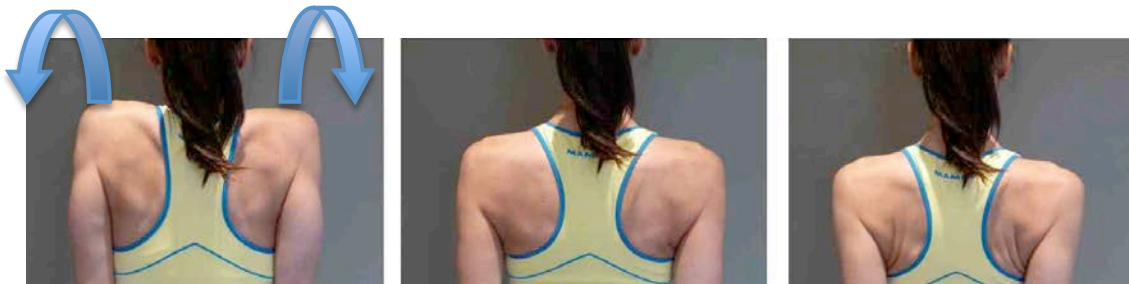
The muscles around the scapula (shoulder blade) are important in helping to position and stabilize the shoulder for arm movements. After surgery, there is a tendency to hunch the shoulder blades up and forwards. Concentrate on keeping your shoulders back and down while wearing the sling.

These exercises can be started immediately after surgery to help retrain and strengthen the scapular stabilizing muscles.

### *Shoulder circles*

Sit with sling on. Shrug your shoulder blades forward, up, back and then down in a circle.

Repeat with both forward and backward circles 10 times in each direction. 3 times daily.



## 2. Elbow exercises

### *A. Normal protocol*

Slip your forearm out of the sling without moving your shoulder.

Gently allow the arm to straighten out as far as comfortable under the effect of gravity. Let it hang as straight as you comfortably can for 30 seconds and then bring it back up. Repeat 3 times.

### *B. Biceps tenodesis or SLAP repair*

You must avoid putting pressure on the biceps tendon/SLAP. To prevent this, avoid using your muscles to bend your elbow.

Using your other hand for support, take your arm from the sling and rest your forearm on a table in front of you, palm down. Keep forearm flat on the table throughout the motion. Straighten your elbow to a maximum of 30°. Use your other hand to bend the elbow back up to 90°, or further if comfortable. Repeat 10 times.

## 3. Wrist and hand exercises

Work on fully extending your fingers, then making a fist and squeezing. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions every hour. Also make gentle wrist movements in flexing, extension and side to side motions while wearing the sling.



#### 4. External rotation

Lie on your back. Hold a pole (eg broom handle or ski pole) with your arms by your sides and elbows bent to 90°. Support the involved shoulder's elbow throughout the movement on a rolled towel (about 15cm high). With your uninvolved arm gently rotate the operated arm outwards. Do not let your elbow move away from the side of your body.

Stop when you begin to feel pain or significant stretching in the involved shoulder.



Max allowed motion: 0° □

45° □

60° □

Full □



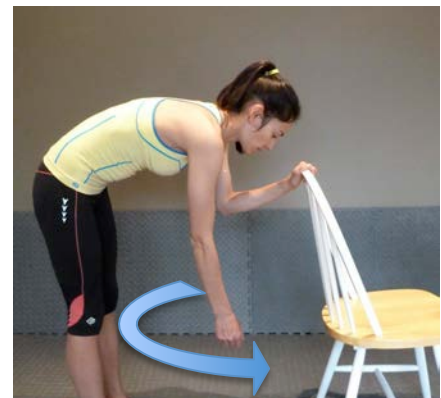
#### 5. Pendulums

Stand behind a chair or support and lean forward.

Gently let the involved arm hang down freely and relaxed.

Swing your arm forwards, backwards, sideways and in circles, using gravity to help you.

Initially perform this exercise for 1-2 minutes, 3-4 times (rest between sets). Eventually you will be able to let the arm hang at 90°.



#### 6. Elevation

Lie on your back and use your good arm to grasp your involved elbow. Gradually lift your involved arm upwards over your head. This movement may be tight, but should not be painful.

The aim is to get to at least 90°.

Hold for 20 seconds and then slowly lower the arm to the starting position.

