



Patient & Family Guide

2024

Shoulder Exercises for Early Recovery



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Shoulder Exercises for Early Recovery

Your injury is now healed well enough that you can do the following exercises without worrying about injuring your shoulder again. You may feel discomfort on the side of your arm rather than over your shoulder. **This discomfort is normal.**

You may have some bruising or swelling in your arm. This will get better with time and the exercises should make that happen sooner. If your arm is quite swollen, lie down with your arm propped up on pillows so it is higher than your heart for 30 minutes, 2 to 3 times a day. This will help the swelling go down.

Tips to help you get comfortable

Your shoulder pain may be worse at night. Try sleeping on your non-injured side with 2 or 3 pillows in front of you. Put your injured arm on the pillows. Remember to put a pillow under your head.



When sitting, try putting 1 or 2 pillows on your lap and rest the elbow of your injured arm on the pillows.



Exercises

Move your arm and/or shoulder as far as you can without too much discomfort.

Only do the exercises you have been asked to do. Plan to do your exercises 3 times each day.

Early movement exercises

□ Exercise 1

- Stand sideways next to a counter or a table. Rest your good arm on the counter. Lean forward as far as it feels comfortable. Let your injured arm hang down and try to keep your shoulder as relaxed as possible.
- Swing it in a **circle**, repeat _____ times.
- Swing it **side to side**, repeat _____ times.
- Swing it **forward and back**, repeat _____ times.



While standing or sitting

□ Exercise 2

- Bend and straighten your elbow as far as possible.
- Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 3

- Move your wrist up and down as far as possible.
- Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 4

- Make a fist and then open your hand to stretch your fingers as much as possible.
- Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 5

- Squeeze putty or a rubber ball in your weak hand.
- Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 6

- Sit in a straight-backed chair and rest your hands in your lap.
- **Do not** move your shoulders.
- Turn your head so that you are looking over your shoulder.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Relax. Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 7

- Sit in a straight-backed chair and rest your hands in your lap.
- Look straight ahead.
- **Do not** move your shoulder.
- Tilt your ear to your shoulder.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Relax.
- Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 8

- Stand or sit in a straight-backed chair and rest your hands in your lap.
- Look straight ahead.
- Shrug your shoulders and then lower them slowly.
- Relax. Repeat _____ times.



□ Exercise 9

- Stand or sit with your elbows bent to 90 degrees and tucked by your sides.
- Pull your shoulder blades down and in towards your spine. If you are sitting down, place your hands in your lap.
- Hold for a slow count of 10.
- Repeat _____ times.



Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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