

## Combined Shoulder Replacement

This leaflet is designed to give you information for the first 3-4 weeks following your operation until you are seen again in the outpatient physiotherapy department.

### Purpose of a shoulder replacement

A shoulder replacement is a surgical procedure used to reduce pain and increase functional range of movement in a degenerative (worn out) joint which may or may not be associated with irreparable muscle damage. On occasions this might follow a severe fracture of the shoulder. Although some patients manage to regain a good level of movement following their surgery (including reaching their hand behind their back) it is important to note that not all types of shoulder replacement are designed for this.

### Following any shoulder replacement

Initially following your surgery you will only be able to use your non-operated arm. There are certain movements and activities that must be avoided during the early stages of your recovery. Your Physiotherapist will demonstrate these movements to you.

1. You must NOT weight bear through your operated arm, especially pushing up from a chair, for 6 weeks after the operation.
2. You should not attempt any heavy activities of daily living (lifting, moving or carrying heavy loads) for 3 months after the operation.
3. Avoid extending the shoulder joint for 3 weeks after the operation (unless you have been told specifically that this is OK). Extending the shoulder joint occurs when you take your arm behind your body as if reaching behind you or tucking in a shirt / scratching your back.

4. Avoid external rotation of the arm past the neutral shoulder position (fingers pointing straight ahead) for 3 weeks after the operation.
5. Returning to work is dependent on the operation and your job role; the decision is guided by your surgeon.
6. You should not drive before 8 weeks after the operation. After this, your function and pain levels will dictate when you can start. Consider short trips initially of no longer than 15 minutes, increasing this time gradually. Please remember it is your responsibility to be in full control of the car and to inform your insurance company that you have had an operation on your shoulder.

### After The Operation

Most people will normally stay in hospital for one night after their operation. This is not mandatory however and is dependent on how comfortable the shoulder feels.

You must avoid moving your arm away from your body until you are instructed to do so by your Physiotherapist.

### Sling Or Brace

Different operations require different levels of support and your physiotherapist will ensure you are fitted with the sling or brace that your surgeon has requested.

Initially your arm may be numb because of the nerve block used during the operation (this is an anaesthetic technique used to control pain). It is important your arm is supported during this time and therefore you will be wearing a sling with a body band for the first 4 hours following your surgery.

BEFORE you leave hospital, please ensure you are familiar with the sling or brace that has been fitted and you are clear about how and when you can take this on and off.

## Pain Control

It is important to have effective pain control immediately following your procedure and on discharge home. You will be given pain medication by the nurses and you will be expected to follow the dose prescribed for you.

Some people find an ice pack (a bag of frozen vegetables works well) helps as a natural form of pain relief. If you do choose to use an icepack, ensure that the icepack does not touch your skin directly by wrapping it in a damp tea-towel. Icepacks can be refrozen after use and used again.

## Wound Care

Swelling and bruising is common following surgery. If necessary you will be given a letter to take to your GP practice to arrange for the wound to be checked and the stitches removed. Occasionally your surgeon will arrange for this to be done at the hospital.

## Washing & Dressing

Whilst hygiene is extremely important, only shower and get the wound wet if you have been told it is safe to do so by the nurses. We would advise you avoid deodorant or talcum powder in areas close to your surgical wound.

When dressing, remember to always put your operated arm into the sleeve before your non-operated arm. Wearing loose fitting and front fastening garments can be helpful. If your armpit becomes sweaty whilst in the sling, try using a folded cotton handkerchief or folded t-shirt to absorb the moisture. As time goes by and you start to make progress with your exercises you will find daily activities will slowly become easier.

If you are concerned with how you might manage at home following your operation, please ask to speak to the Occupational Therapist before going home. They will be able to identify helpful ways to support you to manage day to day tasks following your surgery.

## Sleeping

Interrupted sleep following surgery is entirely normal. However, you may initially find sleeping is more comfortable when lying on your back with several pillows behind you and placing a small towel or pillow under your forearm to support your hand. Alternatively you could lie on your non-operated side and have a pillow in front of you to support your operated arm.

### 1. Total Shoulder Replacement (incl Resurfacing and Reverse Anatomy TSR)

You **must** wear the sling at night time for 3 weeks. We encourage you to remove your arm from the sling during the day after 48 hours, as pain allows. You **must not** externally rotate your shoulder beyond the neutral position (see exercise 4)

#### Exercises For The 1st 3 Weeks.

|         |   |                       |
|---------|---|-----------------------|
| Ex No 1 | ✓ | Start all immediately |
| 2       | ✓ |                       |
| 3       | ✓ |                       |
| 4       | ✓ |                       |
| 5       | ✓ |                       |

### 2. Standard Reverse Shoulder Replacement

You **must** wear the sling **with** the body strap day & night for 3 weeks

You can come out of the sling for washing, dressing and the exercises as instructed by the physiotherapist.

#### Exercises For The 1st 3 Weeks

|         |   |                   |
|---------|---|-------------------|
| Ex No 1 | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 2       | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 3       | → | Start at week 1   |
| 4       | → | Start at week 1   |
| 5       | → | Start at week 1   |

# Specialised Operations

## 1. Protected Reverse Shoulder

### Replacement (Bone Grafted Glenoid)

You **must** wear the sling day & night for at least 3 weeks. The exact length of time in the sling will be instructed by your Physiotherapist.

You can come out of the sling for washing, dressing and the exercises as instructed by the physiotherapist.

### Exercises For The 1st 3 Weeks

| Ex No |   | Start immediately |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| 1     | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 2     | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 3     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |
| 4     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |
| 5     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |

## 2. Reverse Anatomy Shoulder

### Replacement With Latissimus Dorsi Tendon Repair

Depending on your surgery, your surgeon will request either a brace or a sling **with** body band. This **must** be worn day & night for 3 weeks to protect the surgery. After three weeks you will then be changed to a standard sling for a further 3 weeks.

You will be shown how to maintain your hygiene and remove the sling to allow exercising by your Physiotherapist.

### Exercises For The 1st 3 Weeks

| Ex No |   | Start immediately |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| 1     | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 2     | ✓ | Start immediately |
| 3     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |
| 4     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |
| 5     | ✗ | NOT AT ALL        |

## Exercises

After the operation you will be seen by a physiotherapist to start your exercises (see below)

### 1. Shoulder shrugging and shoulder blade exercises

All patients can do shoulder girdle exercises to ease tension in the neck and upper spine region.

- i) Start with shrugging your shoulders up towards your ears followed by gently lowering them downward. Always work within your limits of discomfort.
- ii) Then, when sitting up straight, practise gently pulling your shoulders back and down to hold a good upright posture for 10 second.

Do these  times a day.

## 2. Hand and elbow exercises

- i) Make a fist and straighten your fingers fully
- ii) Touch your thumb to each finger tip
- iii) Move your wrist up and down fully
- iv) Move your wrist side to side fully
- v) Take your sling off regularly to practise bending and straightening your elbow.
- vi) With your elbow at a right angle turn the palm of your hand up and down fully by rotating your forearm.



Remember Do Not Take Your Arm Backwards Past The Line Of Your Body.

Do this  times a day.

## 3. Pendular exercises

This exercise should be performed gently and should be comfortable.

Holding on with your non-operated arm to something that will not move; lean as far forward as you feel safe to. Allow your operated arm to hang forwards.

- i) Gently swing your arm backwards and forwards
- ii) Gently swing your arm in a circular motion



Do this  times a day.

#### 4. External Rotation exercises

**Do not push this exercise into pain and only move your forearm so that it points straight ahead. do not stretch further than the straight ahead position.**



Bend your elbow to 90° and rest your hand on your tummy. From this position, slowly rotate your hand and forearm outwards whilst making sure you keep your elbow tucked into your side. **Your elbow should stay at 90° throughout the exercise.**

Do this  times a day.

#### 5. Active Assisted Flexion exercises



Cradling the wrist / forearm of your operated arm with your hand, gently lift your arm forwards in front of you as far as your pain allows whilst keeping your elbow straight. Try not to shrug your shoulders when performing this exercise.

Do this  times a day.

What type of shoulder replacement have you had?

## Further Information

If you need any further information or advice please ring the AFTERCARE PHYSIOTHERAPISTS on 01392 403509

Your out-patient physiotherapy referral has been sent to

If you have not heard after 2 weeks, please contact this local department directly or the Aftercare team.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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