

Total Shoulder Joint Replacement Rehabilitation

Introduction

Rehabilitation services assist you in safely resuming activities of daily living (ADLs). Physical therapists specialize in mobility activities (such as walking, transferring, using stairs) and related skills. Occupational therapists specialize in activity accomplishment, beginning the necessary self-care tasks (such as hygiene, dressing, toileting). Your prior level of function, personal activity goals, and discharge/home environment will be considered in providing services specific to your needs and concerns.

Pre-Operative Services

Your physician may have had you begin doing some home exercises prior to your surgery. This was to engage you in exercises to strengthen, and maintain range of motion, of your shoulder to better prepare you for rehabilitation following surgery.

Post-Operative Services

After your total shoulder arthroplasty, it is important that you protect your shoulder, allow soft tissue healing to occur, and to work on gentle range of motion as instructed by your surgeon. You will need to do this at home immediately following discharge. Generally, outpatient physical therapy will begin around one to two (1-2) weeks after your surgery.

Your progress will be enhanced by good pain control, so remain consistent with taking your pain medication per your surgeon's instructions. With improved mobility you can expect to reduce your pain and need for medications more quickly.

Activities Immediately Post-Operation to Discharge

You can expect to be seen by a physical therapist, occupational therapist, or nurse to assist you in improving your safety and independence in your everyday activities. Some examples include dressing, bathing, hygiene, self-care, etc.

To allow healing, follow these restrictions on your surgical shoulder for at least 6 weeks, or as directed by your surgeon:

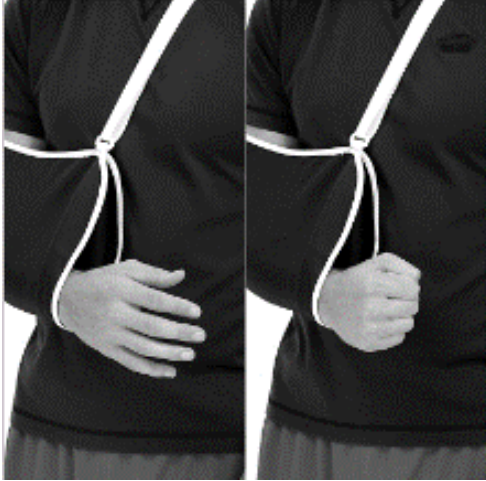
- Limit external rotation to 20-30 degrees, or as advised by surgeon.
- NO resisted internal rotation
- NO Shoulder extension
 - Do not lag your arm behind your back
 - Do not reach back to tuck in pants
 - While sitting in recliner or lying on back, you keep arm propped forward with a pillow. You should be able to see your elbow.
- No lifting
- Maintain good posture
- Use cold packs for the first 3 days after surgery. No heat until after day 3.

Post-Operative Home Exercise Program

Following your shoulder surgery, it is important to maintain an active lifestyle. Walking is great exercise. Perform the following home exercises or as recommended by your surgeon.

Hand pumps

Open and close your hand into a fist and repeat. If you cannot make a full fist, then make a partial fist. Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Wrist flexion/extension

Bend your wrist up and down as shown while your arm is in the sling or shoulder immobilizer (knocking motion). Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Pronation/supination

While in the sling or shoulder immobilizer, rotate your forearm so that your palm is directed upward and then downward as shown. Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Elbow flexion/extension

Carefully take your arm out of the sling, or open the wrist strap of your shoulder immobilizer, using your unaffected arm. Let your affected elbow straighten and allow gravity to stretch it. Then, bend your elbow back to the original bent position and repeat. Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Pendulums

Remove your affected arm from the sling, or shoulder immobilizer, and let it hang freely. Shift your body weight in circles to allow your surgical arm to swing in circles freely. Your surgical arm should be fully relaxed. You can swing your body forward and backwards, side to side, or in circles (both directions). This allows the shoulder joint to move while allowing the surgical site to heal. Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Shoulder flexion

While lying on your back with your arm at your side, clasp the hand of the affected arm and slowly raise it up upwards and towards the sky. Raise your arms upwards. You do not want to bring your hands way above your head initially, limit the motion to about 90 degrees or hands above chest level as shown in the bottom photo. Complete 10 repetitions, 3 times per day.



Photo source for post operative home exercise program: HEP@go.com

Dressing

To protect your shoulder, you must learn safe ways to do daily tasks. This includes getting dressed and undressed. In general, it is best to keep your surgical arm close to your body when dressing and undressing.

- Move clothing to your arm, not arm to clothing.
- Loose fitting shirts that button up the front are ideal.
- It is recommended that you wear loose fitting pants with an elastic band for ease of use.

Physical, and occupational, therapy can instruct you on how to safely get dressed with minimal discomfort.

Putting On a Shirt

- Place your shirt on your lap.
- Place your surgical arm through the first sleeve.
- Find the opening for your head.
- Pull the shirt over your head.
- Put your non-surgical arm through the other sleeve.
- Push your non-surgical arm through the other sleeve.
- With your non-surgical arm, pull the shirt down over your stomach and back.

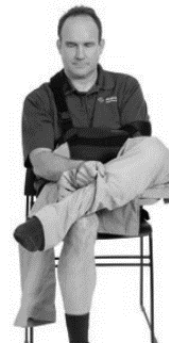


Taking Off a Shirt

- Reverse the steps above, removing the non-surgical arm first.

Putting on Pants/Underwear

- Sit on the edge of a chair or bed.
- With your non-surgical arm place a foot into each pant leg.
 - Be sure to keep your surgical arm in your sling, or immobilizer, snug to your torso.
- With your non-surgical arm pull the waistband up above the knees.
- Stand, and with your non-surgical arm pull the waistband up to the proper height.



Taking Off Pants/Underwear

- Reverse the steps above.



Showering

You will have a sterile dressing over your incision following surgery. Follow the instructions provided by your surgeon regarding when to remove your post-operative dressing.

Avoid direct spray from the showerhead to your incision/dressing.

For the first week or so, sponge baths may be preferred.

Sleeping Positions

Your new shoulder needs extra care while it heals. Use the tips on this sheet to help keep your new shoulder safe while sleeping. Be sure to follow any guidelines from your health care provider.

You may be more comfortable sleeping in a recliner for the first few weeks following your surgery.



To support your surgical arm, be sure to place a pillow behind your elbow to help prevent overstretching or poor alignment.



Sources: www.ahn.org; www.hep2go.com; www.musculoskeletalkey.com; www.yorkvillesportsmed.com; www.rickysinghmd.com; www.deansmithmd.com