Shoulder hemiarthroplasty: discharge advice

This leaflet gives advice and exercises following shoulder surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your physiotherapist.

Introduction





The partial shoulder replacement, as its name suggests, replaces the cartilage on the humeral head (ball part of the shoulder joint) as shown on the x-ray above. Following your operation you will have a scar approximately three inches long on the front of your shoulder.

Your arm will be supported in a sling and a physiotherapist will teach you how to take it on and off to do your exercises. You will be in hospital for 1-2 days.

General guidelines

- **Pain:** A nerve block will be used during the operation which means the shoulder and arm will remain numb for a few hours. The shoulder will be sore when this wears off and this may last a few weeks. It is important to continue to take the painkillers as advised by the hospital. Ice packs may also help reduce the pain. Wrap frozen peas / crushed ice in a damp cold towel and place on the shoulder for up to 10 minutes. Allow at least 20 minutes between each application.
- **Wearing a sling:** You will return from theatre wearing a sling. This is used for approximately 1-2 weeks following your operation. It is important that you remove the sling to exercise. You can stop wearing the sling as soon as you feel comfortable. You can remove the sling from as little as 24 hours post op to shower as long as you hold your arm by your side while you do so.
- **The wound:** Keep the wound dry until it is healed. This normally takes 10-14 days. Your stitches are dissolvable and need only to be trimmed by your practice nurse approximately 10-14 days post-op. You should have a waterproof dressing over the wound and this should remain intact until you see your practice nurse for a wound check unless advised otherwise by the nursing staff.
- **Follow up appointments:** You will be referred to your local physiotherapy department to continue your rehabilitation; this should be around one week post-op. A clinic appointment will be arranged with your surgeon at 6 weeks, 3 months and one year post-op with x-rays.

Following the surgery it is important you follow a strict regime of exercises (outlined below). It is advised that you do the exercises a minimum of 5 times each, three times a day.

For the first six weeks after the operation you must not forcefully turn your arm away from your body or perform tasks which cause resistance against the shoulder as you turn the arm in towards the body. You will begin physiotherapy between one to three weeks after the surgery.

Exercises – from day 1, as pain allows

Postural awareness

Standing or sitting:
Pull the shoulder blades gently back and down, with the chest bone (sternum) naturally coming forwards, as if taking a deep breath in.



Elbow exercises

Standing:
Bend and straighten the elbow fully, using assistance of the good arm if needed.



Standing or sitting:
With a bent elbow turn the forearm over in a clockwise and anti-clockwise direction (palm up, then palm down).



Wrist and hand exercises

Bend the wrist forwards and backwards, then side to side.
Circle the wrist in a clockwise and then an anticlockwise direction.
Squeeze and make a fist. You can use a small ball if you have one.
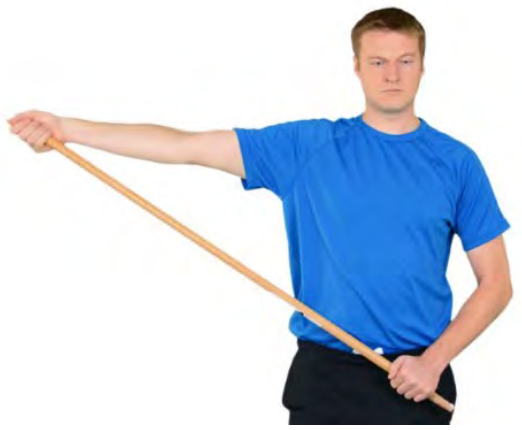


Exercises from 1-2 weeks (or as directed by your physiotherapist)

Sitting at a table :
Put a cloth or small ball underneath the operated arm (hand).
Gently slide the operated arm away from the body, using the ball to take some weight of the arm and lean your body forward into the table.



Lying on your back:
Gently raise your operated arm up and over your head, using your good arm to assist / support as needed.
To start with, it may be more comfortable to do this with a bent elbow.



Standing: Holding a stick in both hands; slowly use the good hand to push the operated arm out to the side and away from the body. Don't worry if you can't go very far to start with. Stand next to the wall and push your hand against the doorframe as if you are turning the arm outwards.	

Resuming normal activities

Timings for returning to functional activities are approximate and will differ depending upon the individual. However, the earliest that these activities may commence are:

- **Driving:** from 4-6 weeks or when safe to control the car in an emergency situation
- **Lifting:** Can resume light lifting at waist level at 3 weeks. Avoid heavy lifting for 3 months.
- **Swimming:** breaststroke 8 - 10 weeks; front crawl: 3 months
- **Golf:** 3 months
- **Contact sports:** speak to your surgeon at your 3 month clinic appointment.
- **Return to work:** dependent upon your occupation but sedentary jobs (no lifting) may return at 6 weeks and manual workers should be guided by your consultant at your three month follow-up appointment.

Note: These are guidelines only.

Further information

Physiotherapy Outpatient Department Physiotherapy East: 0118 322 7811
For questions or concerns please contact: rbft.physiotherapy@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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