

Department of
PHYSIOTHERAPY

Rehabilitation After Shoulder Surgery: Rotator Cuff Repairs / SLAP & Bankart Repairs



Physiotherapy After Surgery

Rehabilitation after surgery is a gradual. You will regain range of motion in the first few weeks and begin strengthening exercises around 3-4 months post-surgery. Most patients return to work and sports after 6 months, though timelines vary based on your procedure and healing progress.

After surgery, your physiotherapist will guide you on:

1. Managing pain and swelling
2. Using your arm sling
3. Performing home exercises

Managing Pain & Swelling

Swelling in the shoulder, elbow, wrist or fingers is common after surgery but will reduce over time. To manage the swelling:

1. Use an ice pack on your shoulder for 15 – 20 minutes a few times a day especially after exercising.
2. Massage your arm upward from your wrist to elbow, then to your shoulder using gentle strokes. Repeat 10 times every 2 hours.
3. Sleep slightly inclined with a pillow under your arm for support. Avoid lying on the operated side.

To be worn for: _____ weeks

Use of Arm Sling

You will be provided with an arm sling. Follow your surgeon / therapist's advice on how long to wear it. Guidelines include:

- Remove only for showering, dressing, or prescribed exercises.
- Wear at all other times including sleeping, sitting, and walking.

Important Post-Surgical Advice & Precautions

1. **Arm sling use:** Wear your arm sling as directed by your surgeon or therapist.



Fig 1. The correct way to wear an arm sling

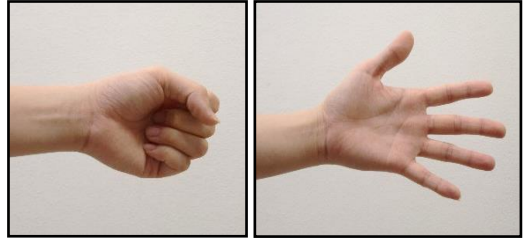
2. **Pain medication:** Take prescribed pain medications to reduce pain and help you to perform your exercises.
3. **Avoid heavy lifting:** Do not lift or carry items heavier than a glass of water or a plate of food.
4. **Avoid weight-bearing:** Do not put weight on your operated arm (e.g. pushing up from a chair or bed)
5. **Avoid sudden movements:** Refrain from sudden or jerky movements.
6. **Avoid driving:** Do not drive until your surgeon gives clearance.
7. **Avoid active movement:** Do not actively move (without support) your operated arm until advised to do so.
8. **Avoid shoulder external rotation beyond neutral:** Do not turn your palm away from your body to face forwards while keeping your elbow tucked against your body.
8. Perform prescribed exercises regularly.
9. Stop any exercise that causes excessive pain and inform your therapist during your next review.
10. Seek medical attention if you experience numbness in your operated arm for more than 48 hours after surgery.

Home Exercise Programme

You may remove your arm sling when doing your exercises.

Finger Pumping

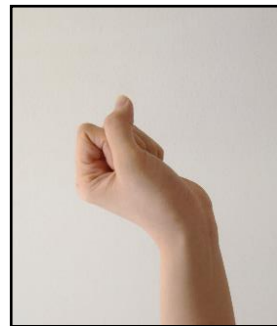
1. Curl your fingers toward your palm to form a fist.
2. Keep your fist closed for 3 to 5 seconds
3. Open your hand and spread your fingers wide.



Repeat ___ times

Wrist Flexion / Extension

1. Sit or stand with your elbow bent to form an L-shape, holding your hand as if you are about to shake hands.
2. Move your hand inward toward your body, bending at your wrist.
3. Move your hand backward away from your body, bending at your wrist.
4. Repeat the movements slowly and in a smooth motion.



Repeat ___ times

❑ Chin Tucks

1. Stand with your head and back against a wall.
2. Gently bring your chin inward toward the wall, as if nodding.

Keep your jaw relaxed and ensure the back of your head stays against the wall throughout.

Hold ___ seconds.

Repeat ___ times.

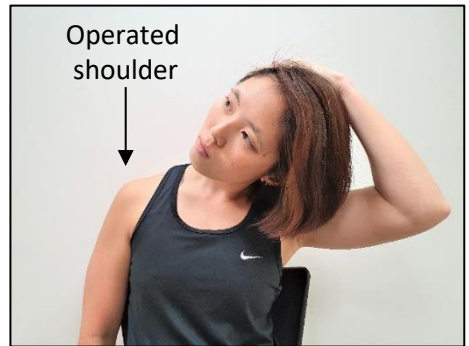


❑ Neck Side Bending Stretch

1. Bend your head sideways, away from your operated shoulder.
2. Use your other hand to gently pull your head down toward your shoulder until you feel a stretch in your neck.

Hold ___ seconds.

Repeat ___ times.



Elbow Flexion / Extension (Active Movement)

1. Sit or stand with your arm by your side.
 2. Keep your elbow close to your body.
 3. Bend your elbow to lift your hand toward your shoulder.
 4. Slowly lower your hand back down.
- Repeat ___ times



Elbow Flexion / Extension (Passive Movement)

1. Stand with your injured arm by your side, palm facing forward.
 2. Place your other hand at the back of your wrist.
 3. Gently use your other hand to lift your forearm toward your shoulder, bending your elbow.
 4. Slowly lower your forearm back to the starting position.
- Repeat ___ times



Shoulder Blade Squeeze

1. Sit or stand with your arms relaxed by your sides.
 2. Pull your shoulder blades together and slightly downward, as if squeezing a small ball or towel roll between them.
 3. Slowly relax your shoulders to the starting position.
- Hold ___ seconds.
Repeat ___ times.



☐ **Shoulder Flexion (Passive Movement)**

1. Lie on your back with your elbow bent and your arm resting across your stomach.
2. Use your other arm to cradle your forearm and elbow.
3. Gently use your other arm to lift your elbow as high as possible, up to 90 degrees (pointing toward the ceiling).
Keep your exercising arm relaxed throughout the movement.
4. Slowly lower your arm to the starting position.

Repeat ___ times



☐ **Shoulder Abduction (Passive Movement)**

1. Sit / Lie on your back with your elbow bent and your arm resting across your stomach.
2. Use your other arm to cradle your forearm and elbow.
3. Gently use your other arm to lift your elbow to the side, as high as possible, up to 90 degrees (in line with your shoulder).
4. Slowly lower your arm to the starting position.

Repeat ___ times.



☐ **Shoulder Flexion (Assisted Active Movement)**

1. Lie on your back with your elbow bent and your arm across your stomach.
2. Use your other arm to cradle your forearm and elbow.
3. Lift your exercising arm up towards the ceiling.
4. At the same time, use your other hand to assist with this movement by gently lifting your exercising arm.
5. Slowly lower both arms back to where you started.

Repeat ___ times



☐ **Shoulder Abduction (Assisted Active Movement)**

1. Sit with your elbow bent and your arm resting across your stomach.
2. Use your other arm to cradle your forearm and elbow.
3. Raise your elbow to the side as high as possible, up to 90 degrees (in line with your shoulder), while gently assisting with your other hand.
4. Slowly lower both arms to the starting position.

Repeat ___ times.



☐ **Shoulder External Rotation to Neutral (Passive Movement)**

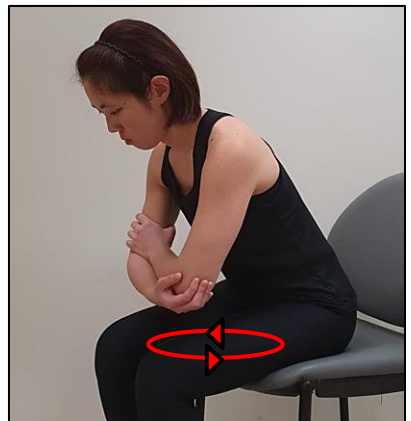
1. Sit or stand beside a wall with your elbow positioned between the wall and your body.
 2. Bend your arm, resting your forearm across your stomach.
 3. Use your other hand to support your forearm.
 4. Gently move your forearm toward the wall until it touches the wall.
 5. Slowly move your arm back to the starting position.
- Hold ___ seconds. Repeat ___ times.



☐ **Shoulder Pendulum (Cradled) – Circles**

1. Sit with your forearm resting across the front of your body.
2. Use your other arm to cradle your forearm and elbow.
3. Lean forward from your hips, allowing your injured arm to hang down and relax while supported.
4. Slowly move your body in a circular motion, using your body's momentum to passively move the injured arm.
5. Avoid using your shoulder muscles to lift or swing the injured arm.

Repeat ___ times



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