

**Shoulder AC Joint Reconstruction
 Rehabilitation Protocol**

By James L Chen, MD

Phase	Time	Exercises/Activities/RESTRICTIONS	Goals
Early Post operation	0-2 weeks	Wear sling at all times No lifting objects on injured side Pendulum exercises	Pain control Swelling control
Phase I	2-6 weeks	Wear sling at all times No lifting objects on injured side Pendulum exercises Scapular stabilization exercises Isometric biceps/triceps	Healing of repair
Phase II	6-12 wks	FORMAL PT Passive/Active ROM Gain full ROM Shoulder shrugs Rotator cuff program Continue scapular stabilization Biceps/Triceps strengthening Discontinue sling No contact sports	Regain full ROM Begin strengthening exercises
Phase III	12-18 wks	Active ROM exercises Shoulder strengthening program No contact sports	Return to full activities
Phase IV	>18 wks	Advance to full activities	

Post Operative Instructions

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY:

Ice: Use ice or the cold therapy unit over the shoulder for 15 minutes every 1 to 2 hours to decrease pain and inflammation.

Pain medication: You will be given a prescription for a narcotic for pain control. Begin taking the pain medication as prescribed as soon as you have pain. Do not wait until you are in severe pain before taking them as it takes 30 to 45 minutes to work. You should be able to stop taking the pain medicine within two to three weeks. Avoid taking Tylenol while you are taking the narcotic as they both contain acetaminophen which can be dangerous to your liver in high amounts.

Eating: Begin eating with liquids and light foods (jello, soup, bread). Progress to your normal diet slowly over the 24 hours following surgery. The narcotics can make you nauseous, so take them with food whenever possible.

DAY 1 AND UNTIL POST-OP VISIT:

Dressings: Keep the splint on the surgical site until your first post-operative visit— usually 5-7 days after your surgery. This decreases the risk of post-operative infection.

Bathing: You may bathe after your surgery, but keep the arm elevated and out of the tub, with the dressings completely dry and the bandages on. Do not shower as the dressing will get wet. Once the sutures are removed you may shower or bathe and get the incision wet. No swimming in the pool or ocean until instructed by your surgeon.

Sling: Continue to use the sling until your first post operative visit. You will continue to wear the sling for **6 weeks** following surgery to allow for time for the shoulder to heal.

Driving: Do not drive until instructed to do so.

Therapy: You will begin formal physical therapy at **7-10 days** following surgery. Contact a local physical therapy provider to begin therapy prior to surgery in order to schedule a physical therapy visit.

It is normal to experience some swelling and bruising in the arm, elbow, and wrist. You may bend the elbow and wrist. This will decrease the amount of swelling that you have in the arm. It is very helpful to keep the arm elevated on 2-3 pillows so that the arm is above the level of the heart while lying down.

Please call the office (415) 900-3000 if you have questions or any of the following:

- Fever greater than 101.5 or 38.5 degrees
- Continuing drainage from the wound
- Unrelenting pain
- Excessive nausea/vomiting due to pain medication
- ANY other worrisome condition

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Post Operative Instructions: Shoulder Surgery

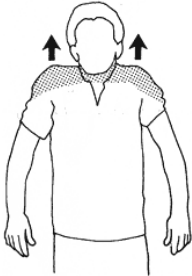
EXERCISES:

Do these exercises following your shoulder surgery to decrease your pain and swelling and increase your range of motion.

START POST-OPERATIVE DAY 1 (do 5 times a day):

Begin range of motion exercises of the elbow, wrist, and hand immediately, as comfort permits. Straighten and bend the elbow, wrist, and fingers. Do these exercises several times a day so your elbow, wrist, and hand do not get stiff.

Shoulder shrugs. Shrug your shoulders up as far as they can go, and hold them there for a count of 5- 10 seconds. Lower your shoulders down and then repeat 10 times. See Figure 1



Scapula Squeeze: Flex the muscles between your shoulder blades and try and pull your shoulder blades together in the back. Hold your muscles in that position for 5-10 seconds. Relax and then repeat 10 times.



Ball squeezes. (Tennis ball or small squeezable ball)

Grip Squeeze



Elbow Range of Motion: Remove arm strap of sling. Straighten and bend your elbow as far as you can tolerate. Do this 10 times slowly.

Elbow active range of motion



Actively turn your palm up, then down. Do this 10 times to work on hand and wrist rotation.

Pendulum Exercises: Remove sling and bend at waist to 90 degrees. Gently swing arm in circular “pendulum” motion

Pendulum



Ice with sling on:

Ice x 10-15min 2-3 x per day

