

Shoulder Surgery General

Why did my shoulder pain increase the night of surgery?

As the nerve block wears off your pain returns. It's normal to have increased pain the night of surgery. Begin taking prescribed pain medication prior to the block wearing completely off.

My whole arm is bruised. Is this normal?

Yes, it is normal for your arm to bruise. The bruising and swelling follow gravity, and it's normal to have swelling and bruising down to your elbow. Sometimes it even extends down to your fingers. Applying gently heat and massage will decrease the bruising.

I had surgery several weeks ago, and I still can't sleep on that shoulder. Is this normal?

Yes. Several months may pass before you are able to comfortably sleep on your shoulder. It may be more comfortable to sleep in a recliner or in bed with your upper body propped up with pillows.

Shoulder Arthroscopy

How long should I wear the sling?

1-2 days after surgery.

What exercises should I do?

The day after surgery you may begin doing pendulums. Lean forward with arm hanging straight down. Gently move your body side to side and front to back to cause your arm to move in a circular motion. Do not use the muscles in your arm or shoulder.

1-2 weeks after surgery you may begin doing wall walks and pulleys.

When you have regained full motion you may begin lightweight strengthening. This is typically 6 weeks after surgery. You should start with 3-5 pounds and only do exercises below shoulder height.

Open rotator cuff repair or biceps tenodesis or labrum repair and Total Shoulder

How long should I wear the sling?

3 weeks total. 2 weeks with the pillow. The pillow may be removed for the third week. You may take off the sling to do your exercises and shower. Please sleep in the sling.

What exercises should I be doing?

The day after surgery you may begin doing gentle pendulum exercises. Do only these until your post op visit.

After your first postop visit you may add in wall walks and pulleys. Continue doing pendulums as well. Try to do your exercises about 3 times a day. Do wall walks while in the shower. The warm water beating on your arm will feel good.

When can I lift my arm on its own?

6 weeks after surgery. The greatest chance of tearing the rotator cuff is during the first 6 weeks. The tendon needs time to heal to the bone.

When may I begin lightweight strengthening?

It will be at least 6 weeks from surgery and after you have regained full motion. Do not start strengthening until instructed by our office. Lightweight strengthening means 3-5 pounds and below shoulder height. No overhead lifting.

Exercises

1. PENDULUMS

Lean forward at the waist. Let your arm hang straight down. Rock your body in all directions to move your arm. Gently move your arm forward, backward, and in circles. Work on making the circles bigger over time. Do not actively use the muscles in your arm or shoulder.

2. WALL WALKS

Stand in front of a wall. Stand close enough that your fingertips can rest on the wall with your elbow bent. Walk your fingertips up the wall. Stop when it hurts and walk arm back down. Do not let arm drop back down. Work on being able to walk up higher and higher.

3. PULLEYS

Take a rope and place it through a cabinet handle or a hook that is above your head. Hold one end in each hand. Pull the rope with your good arm to raise your operative arm. Then slowly move good arm back up to allow the operative arm to lower. Do not actively use the operative arm. Work on being able to raise your arm higher and higher.