

Managing activities of daily living after shoulder surgery

Following surgery your shoulder will be immobilised in a sling to support your joint. A Healthcare professional will demonstrate and practice the removal and application of the sling to ensure you will manage on discharge. You are required to wear your sling day and night, removing it only to complete your exercises and personal care – unless informed otherwise.

Managing your personal care after shoulder surgery

Whilst you are required to wear your shoulder sling we recommend that you strip wash, to reduce the risk of injury/falls. Wear loose fitting clothing e.g. t-shirts, shirts or blouses to aid ease of dressing independently. Avoid straps being placed over your wound

Wearing elasticated trousers/ skirts/ jogging bottoms, will make it easier to dress/undress your lower body. Wear slip on footwear with backs avoiding laces.

Washing and dressing technique

To undress, remove your shoulder immobiliser; Undress your non operated arm first, then pull garment over your head gently to enable you to slide clothing over your operated arm resulting in no movement from your shoulder joint.

Use a flannel or wet wipe (non-perfumed) to gently wash under your operated armpit. You must avoid actively moving your shoulder to gain access.

Helpful tip: if you bend forward gently you will notice gravity assists in opening up the space of your armpit to enable you to wash/dry with ease.

To dress: always dress your operated arm first, sliding clothing gently past your elbow then up to your shoulder then placing the clothing over your head, finally placing your non-operated

arm through. Once you have your clothing on, immediately re apply your shoulder immobiliser to support your shoulder joint in position.

Domestic activities

Whilst your shoulder is immobilised, only use your non operated arm in task e.g feeding, meal preparation, snacks and hot drink making. No weight is to be placed through your operated arm.

We recommend that you have ready meals or easy to prepare meals whilst you are recovering from your surgery. You may wish to consider one handed assistive aids to increase your independence during kitchen tasks (e.g. one handed cutlery, plate guard, one handed jar opener, non-slip mat, travel kettle) for you to purchase prior admission.



You may require support with shopping initially on discharge due to NO heavy lifting; consider family/friend support, Age UK or online shopping.

Transferring on/off bed, chair and Toilet

No weight must be placed through your operated shoulder whilst getting on/off furniture. Please practice prior to admission your bed/ chair and toilet transfers – if you experience difficulties please contact the Occupational Therapy Department for further advice.

Discharge planning

- Ensure you have a relative or friend to bring and collect you from hospital
- Ensure you have brought with you suitable



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loose day clothes to wear during your hospital admission, including suitable footwear.

- Ensure you have organised daily support with compression stockings for six weeks.
- Ensure you have organised support with shopping and housework.

If you are a day case surgery patient and you anticipate you will require support with personal care post-surgery, please ensure support for this is organised in preparation for your discharge home. You are responsible for self-referring to your local social services for a package of care assessment; this must be set up prior to admission to start on the day of your discharge home.

If you have any concerns or questions in relation to your discharge home, please contact:

Therapy Services and ask to speak to an Occupational Therapist.

Please call 0121 685 4122, Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm.