

## SHOULDER INJURY

You have injured your shoulder and been provided with a sling/support. This leaflet will give you information to help you manage your shoulder, and reduce any complications allowing you to return to your usual activities as soon as possible.

### What should I expect

Your shoulder may be painful and swollen, bruising and swelling may well spread down your arm, but this does not mean there is any damage to the rest of your arm.



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You may need to wear the sling for up to six weeks, if advised to do so by your doctor or physiotherapist. Unless you have been told otherwise, you should wear your sling outside your clothes. In the early stages you will find it more comfortable to sleep in your sling.

### What can I do to help myself?

#### Wear your sling

A broad armsling should support your arm from the elbow to the wrist, with the elbow at right angles allowing you to move your wrist. A collar and cuff sling supports around the wrist allowing the elbow to hang freely.

It is essential that you maintain good posture and regularly loosen or release your sling to move and exercise your elbow, wrist and hand to prevent stiffness in these joints.

**Good posture:** Sit or stand upright, tuck your chin in to lengthen your neck, gently squeeze your shoulder blades down and backwards.

These exercises should be done at least 4 times a day. Remove the sling to exercise.

1. Bend and straighten your elbow as far as is comfortable.



2. Turn your hand over one way and then the other way.



3. Make a fist, then straighten your fingers.



### **Getting washed**

You may need assistance to wash under your injured arm. It may be easier to use a shower.

Lean forwards, allowing your shoulder to gently move away from your body enough to wash or wipe your armpit.

### **Getting dressed**

You will find it easier to wear front-opening clothes; always dress your injured arm first.

### **Sleeping**

You may find that initially it is easier to sleep propped up, or on your back with a pillow under your injured arm.

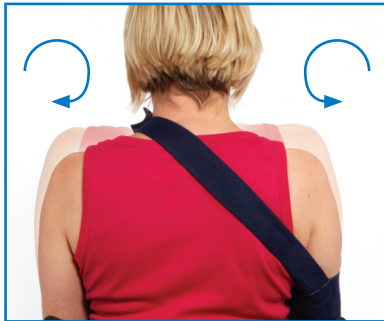
#### **1. Sitting**



#### **2. Lying**



Only do these exercises when you have been advised by your doctor or physiotherapist :-



Shrug your shoulders up and then stretch your shoulder blades down your back.

Lean on a table with your good arm. Allow the other arm to hang relaxed straight down. Gently swing it forwards and backwards.



With your hands clasped in front of you, lift your hands above your head as far as is comfortable.

Lift your arm to the side, assisting the movement with your other hand.





Sitting, place your hands on a table. Slide your hands along the table as far as you can without lifting your shoulders.

Lying on your back, elbow bent. Straighten your arm towards the ceiling.



Shoulder injuries may last a long time depending on how complex the injury is and your general medical health. Most people recover well over 3 to 6 months, but it can take up to 18 months to 2 years and some people will have continuing stiffness. Recovery varies considerably from person to person.

If you have any further questions, please contact your Physiotherapy Department:

- **Doncaster Royal Infirmary** 01302 366666 ext 3135/3585
- **Bassetlaw Hospital** 01909 502046 ext 2302
- **Montagu Hospital** 01709 585171 ext 5626
- **Retford Hospital** 01777 863400

For out of hours advice please contact your GP and you will be referred to your local out of hours service.