



# Shoulder Fracture

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## **You will not be routinely followed up.**

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Extended Scope Physiotherapist.

## **You have sustained a fracture to your shoulder.**

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint you have fractured the outside of the ball part. This normally takes between 6-12 weeks to unite (heal). Once the fracture begins to heal it is important to keep the shoulder moving to overcome the stiffness but not to aggravate it. The shoulder joint does not respond well to being injured and longstanding stiffness is often inevitable.

Take pain killers as prescribed. You may find it more comfortable to sleep propped up with pillows.

If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan,

**Or**, if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area,

**Or**, have any questions, then please phone the number at the top of this letter for advice.



As this fracture was completely un-displaced (the bone has not moved) there is no need for you to be routinely followed up the in fracture clinic.

You have however been referred to physiotherapy service for rehabilitation which has been arranged to start approximately 3 weeks after your injury.

If you have not received a letter for this appointment, please get in touch using the contact number at the top of this page.

## **Smoking cessation**

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website:  
<http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

Please follow the Management/rehabilitation plan shown below:

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation Plan
0-3	Wear the sling all the time, except when performing your exercises as described below, even at night in bed. <b>It is very important to start the exercises as soon as you feel able, ideally within the first 72 hours. It may take a few days of performing the initial exercises to be comfortable with the pendulum exercises.</b>
3-6	Continue to wear the sling but progress to the Stage 2 exercises. Do not lift your elbow above shoulder height as this may cause excessive pain.
6 -12	Try not to use the sling. Begin normal light activities with the arm and shoulder. Increase movement using the Stage 3 exercises. The fracture should be largely united (healed). You should be able to increase day to day activities. More arduous tasks may cause discomfort. Start to lift your arm overhead if possible.
12	<b>If you are still experiencing significant pain and stiffness then please contact us for further consultation.</b>

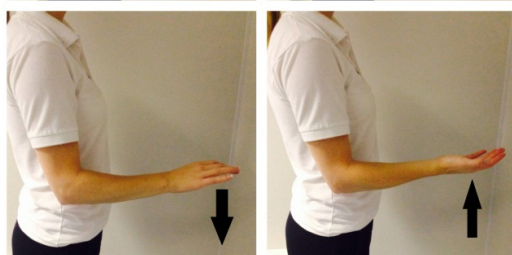
### Initial Exercises to do 4-5 times a day:

If you have stiffness in your elbow or hand from wearing the sling, you may wish to perform these exercises first. However, once they become easy you can start with the posture and pendulum exercises.



#### Elbow Bend to Straighten

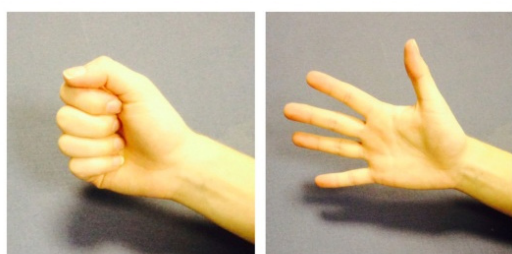
Bend and straighten your elbow so you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.



#### Forearm Rotations

Put your elbow at your side. Bend it to 90 degrees. Slowly rotate your palm up and down until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.

Repeat 10-15 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.

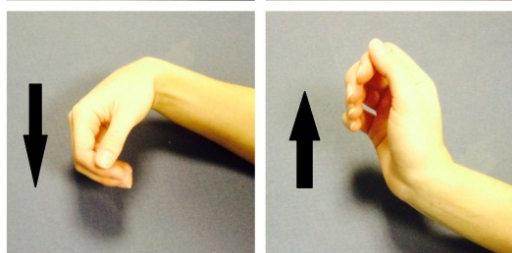


#### Finger and wrist flexion and extension

Open and close your hand as shown 10-15 times.

Then move your wrist up and down 10-15 times.

After a few days, hold a soft ball/ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.



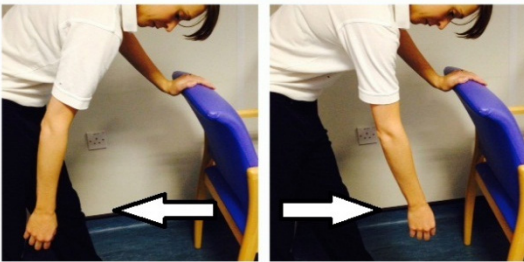
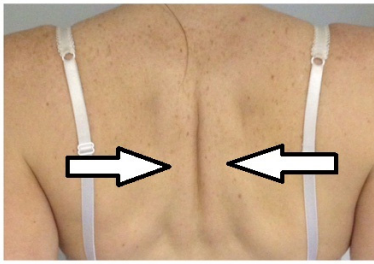
Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



### Postural awareness

Bring your shoulders back and squeeze your shoulder blades together as shown in the picture. Do this with or without your sling on.

Hold the position for 20-30 seconds and repeat 5 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.

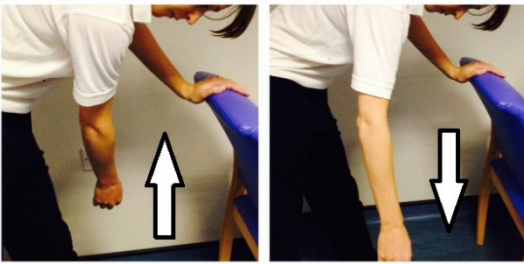


### Shoulder pendulum exercises

Stand and lean forward supporting yourself with your other hand. Try to relax your injured arm and let it hang down.

1. Swing your arm slowly and gently forwards and backwards.
2. Swing your arm slowly and gently side to side.
3. Swing your arm slowly and gently in circles clockwise.

Continue for approximately 1-2 minutes in total provided there is no increase in symptoms. Remember to try and relax your arm.



**Stage 2 exercises to do 4-5 times a day.**

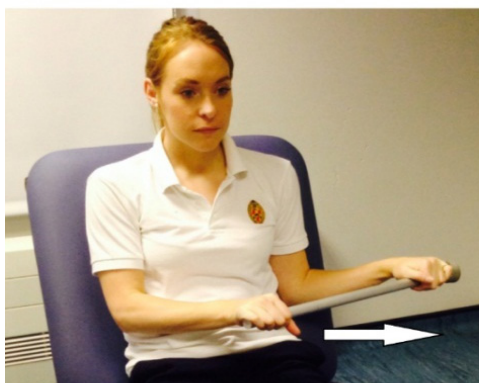
**To start at 4 weeks:**



### Active assisted Shoulder flexion

Use your other hand to lift your arm up in front of you as shown in the pictures.

Repeat 10 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.



### Active assisted External rotation

Keep the elbow of your injured arm tucked into your side and your elbow bent. Hold onto a stick/umbrella/golf club or similar. Use your unaffected arm to push your injured hand outwards. Remember to keep your elbow tucked in. Push until you feel a stretch.

If you don't have a stick you could simply hold the injured arm at the wrist and guide it outwards.

Hold for 5 seconds then return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.



### Stage 3 exercises to do 4-5 times a day.

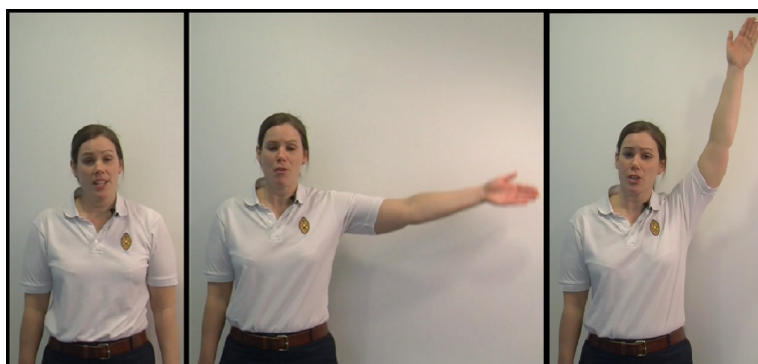
#### To start at 6 weeks:

When you have regained full range of movement during the above exercises without pain you can start to do the exercises without the support of your other hand; this is known as active range of movement. Then when you have regained your full range of movement without the support of the other arm you can start to build up your regular activities.



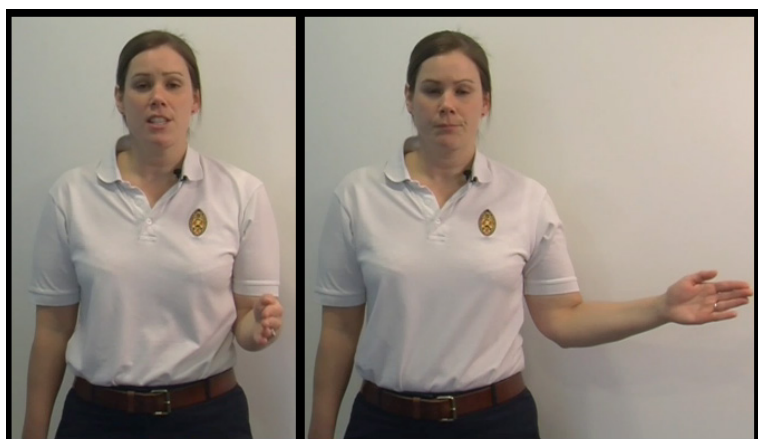
#### Active Forward flexion:

With your thumb facing up, try to move your arm up, keeping it close beside your body.



#### Active Abduction

With your thumb facing up and outwards, try to move your arm in a big arc out to the side.



#### Active External rotation

With your elbow by your side, rotate your forearm outwards, keeping your elbow at about 90 degrees in flexion.

Repeat all of these 3 exercises 10 times each, 4-5 times a day. Only go as far as you can naturally, without doing any trick movements to try and get further. This will increase over time and should not be forced.

If you are having problems progressing with the exercises and have a follow-up consultation booked, please do let the clinician know so that they can review the exercises and refer you on to Physiotherapy if necessary.

If you are on an independent management programme, then please contact us using the number at the top of the letter so that we can also arrange physiotherapy for you.