



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Shoulder exercises (6 week plan)

Physiotherapy department

Patient information



What is this information about?

This information is about wrist, elbow and shoulder exercises.

It tells you:

- What exercises you can do to keep your shoulder mobile while it heals which will help it get better quicker.
- Who to contact if you need further help and support.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because, if you follow the advice in it, it will help you to move your shoulder to prevent stiffness.

Doing the exercises shown below will help you to get back to moving your shoulder in the way that you did before your injury as far as possible.

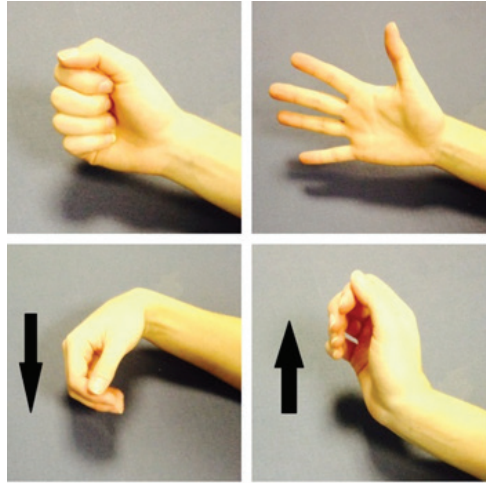
What exercises I should practice during week 1?

- If you have stiffness in your elbow or hand from wearing the sling, you may wish to do wrist and elbow exercises first. Once you can do these easily you can stop them but continue with the shoulder exercises.
- Aim to do the exercises five times a day. They should not cause you too much pain. Do fewer if they are making your pain worse.
- You can move on to the next stage of exercises as soon as you feel ready.

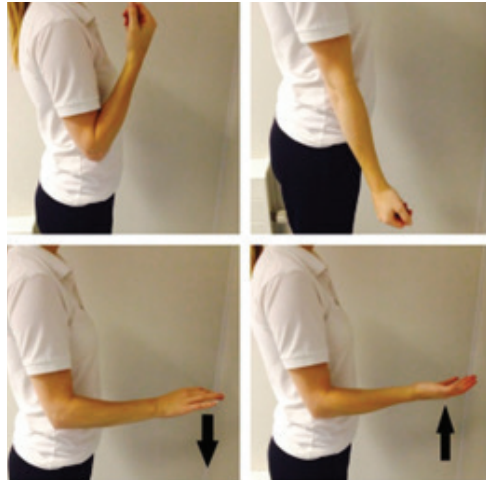
Hand, wrist and elbow exercises

Finger and wrist bending and straightening: open and close your hand as shown **10 times**. Then move your wrist up and down **10 times**.

After around 3 to 5 days progress to holding a soft ball or ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain. **Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times**.



Elbow Bending to Straighten: bend and straighten your elbow as far as you can without pain. You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to help if you need to. **Repeat 10 times** if there is no increase in pain.



Forearm Rotations: keep your elbow at your side and bent to 90 degrees. Slowly turn your palm up (supination) and down (pronation). You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to help if you need to. **Repeat 10 times** if there is no increase in pain.

Posture exercise:

Bring your shoulders back and gently squeeze your shoulder blades together. **Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 5 times.**



Shoulder pendulum exercises

Stand next to a firm surface. Support yourself with your un-injured arm and lean forwards. Let your injured arm relax and hang down to the ground.



Gently swing your arm, making a small movement. Try to do this forward and backward, side to side and in small circles. Keep your arm relaxed as you swing it.

Aim to do this for 1 to 2 minutes in total.

This exercise can cause some discomfort when you first start to do it. This will usually ease off after you have repeated the exercise a few times.

You need to swing your arm gently so it does not cause you too much discomfort. Remember to keep your arm relaxed.

What exercises I should practice from week 2 to week 3?

- You can move on this next stage of exercises as soon as you feel ready
- Aim to practice exercises 5 times a day. They should not cause you too much pain. Do fewer if they are making your pain worse.

Exercises:

Supported arm elevation

Use your other hand to lift your injured arm up in front of you, as shown in these pictures. **Repeat 10 times** if there is no increase in pain.



Supported arm external rotation

Keep the elbow of your injured arm tucked into your side and your elbow bent. Hold onto a stick, umbrella, or something similar.

Use your good arm to push your injured hand outwards. Remember to keep your elbow tucked in. If you do not have a stick, hold your injured arm at the wrist and guide it outwards with your good hand. **Repeat 10 times** if there is no increase in pain.



What exercises I should practice from week 4 to week 6?

- You can move on this next stage of exercises as soon as you feel ready
- Aim to practice exercises 5 times a day. They should not cause you too much pain. Do fewer if they are making your pain worse.

Exercises:

Arm elevation

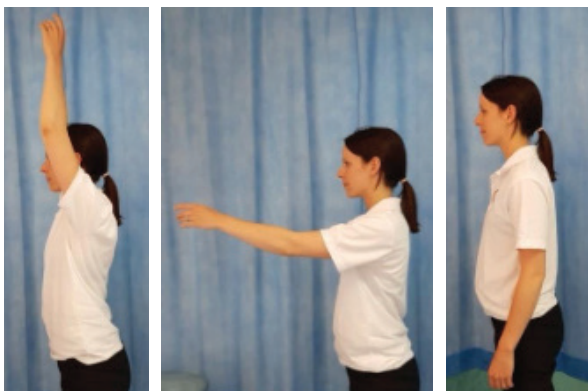
Lift your arm forwards in front of you.

Try to raise the arm as high as you can.

This exercise can cause some discomfort. You do not need to raise your arm so high or for so long

that it causes too much pain. If this is too difficult,

try the same movement with a bent elbow. **Repeat 10 times.**



Raising your arm out to the side

With your palm facing forwards, move your arm out to the side in a big arc. Try to raise your arm as high as you can. If this is too difficult, try the same movement with a bent elbow. You do not need

to raise your arm so high or for so long that it causes too much pain.



Arm rotation

Start with your elbow bent by your side. Move your forearm out to the side, keeping your elbow bent and near your waist.

Repeat 10 times if there is no increase in pain.



What should I do if I am struggling with my sling?

Do contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic. We can give you advice or arrange for your sling to be adjusted or changed if needed.

When can I start driving?

You can return to driving when:

- You are no longer using your arm sling
- You can turn the steering wheel as much as you need to without it hurting
- You can safely deal with all emergency situations without being in pain or hesitating. For example, you must be able to stop the car quickly and in full control and safely avoid obstacles
- You are covered by your insurance company.

Be aware

Always try driving in a safe place first.

How can I get a note for work?

Please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

How do I contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic?

We aim to respond to messages within 24 hours during these times. At times you may receive a call outside of these hours.

Worthing

01903 205111 Ext. 86312

St Richards

01243 788122 Ext. 35503

uhsussex.vfc@nhs.net

Working hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

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This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in St Richard's Hospital and Worthing Hospital.

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