

  
**Orthopedic & SportsMedicine**  
**Clinic of Fairbanks**

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Performing Activities of Daily Living (ADL's) After Shoulder Surgery.

After your shoulder surgery, you will be one-handed for a period of time and will need to think about how you will do certain tasks when you return home from The Surgery Center. The following guide gives some tips on how to manage at home. Any equipment suggested in this handout can be purchased through the companies listed at the end of these instructions. This is a guideline only; if you have any questions, please speak to the medical staff at Orthopedic and SportsMedicine Clinic of Fairbanks for instructions given directly by your surgeon and tailored specifically to your operation.

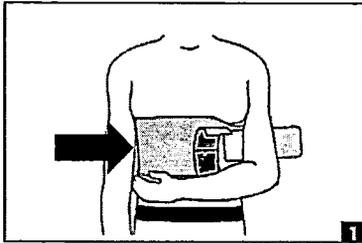
Living with an immobilizer



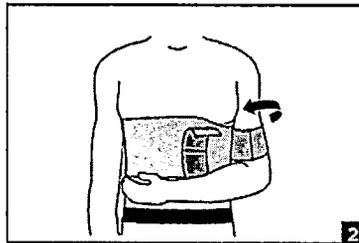
**You may be asked to wear an immobilizer or a sling specifically chosen or approved by your surgeon. You will have to follow the following precautions to protect your shoulder.**

**If you have an immobilizer or sling 1. DO NOT WALK without the immobilizer or sling secured properly 2. Do not use your surgically repaired arm to hold ANY objects or open anything such as medications, jars or any objects of that nature, including cups, until cleared by your surgeon directly.**

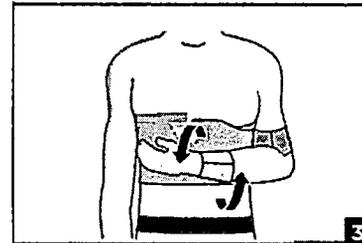
## Immobilizer Instructions



**Step 1:** Secure immobilizer around chest area with humeral cuff under the arm to be immobilized.



**Step 2:** Secure the humeral cuff around the arm to be immobilized.

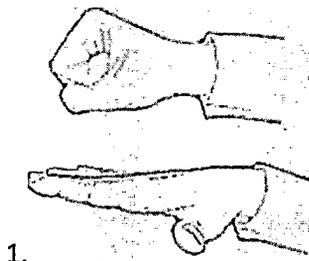


**Step 3:** Place wrist in foam padded wrist cuff and secure by placing the upper strap pulled downward first, then securing lower Velcro strap upward providing support.

Throughout the whole time the arm must not be allowed to go lower than the position it is in when in the sling or immobilizer. Someone other than yourself should take full control of the arm and assist you. You need to keep the arm as relaxed as possible and allow the assisting person to "do the work". **Your sling or immobilizer must stay on at all times, day and night except when you are performing your exercises if instructed or in the shower.**

You may be given some exercises on movements to do post-operatively. There will be a physical demonstration provided in office 48 hours after your surgery by clinical staff or by your physical therapist once released for PT. **These exercises do not include the shoulder or bicep and are simple supported movements while in a sitting position.**

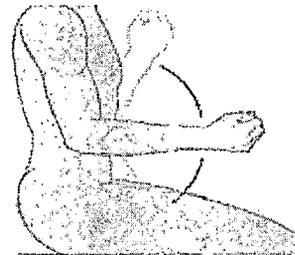
## Hand, Wrist, and Elbow Exercises



1.



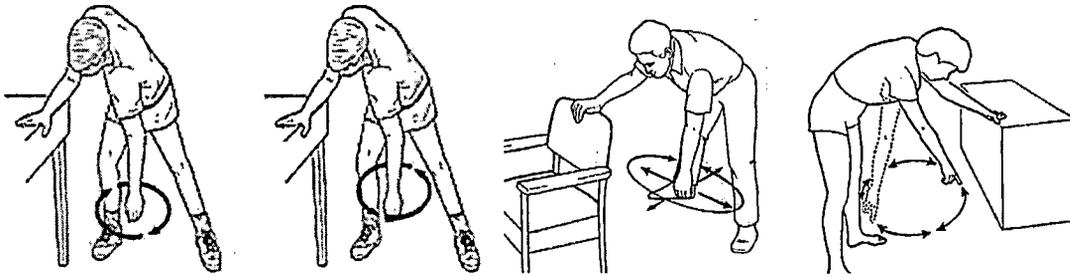
2.



3.

**All of these exercises should be done gently and without vigorous movements, weight or extending the arm upward or outward.**

## Pendulums Exercise



**\*\*DO NOT PERFORM PENDULUMS UNLESS DIRECTED TO DO SO BY YOUR SURGEON OR MEDICAL STAFF\*\***

Perform the pendulum exercise while standing and bending at the waist. Support yourself with unaffected arm on a low table or non-rolling chair. Let your affected arm hang freely, keeping your elbows straight throughout the exercise. You will be provided a physical demonstration in office by clinical staff at your dressing change appointment if you have any questions.

For circular movement, place your feet about two feet apart bending at the waist, make 12" circles clockwise then counter clockwise.

Perform exercise for 10 minutes every 12 hours.

### **Activity:**

- Do your exercises as directed
- Remember, you will feel some pain during your exercises. Try and make progress each day to regain your normal range of motion.
- Avoid lifting ANY objects with your arm until advised otherwise.
- After exercises have been performed, ice the shoulder for no longer than 15-30 minutes.
- Consider using a 1-gallon zip lock (doubled) as your ice pack.

**\*\*DO NOT PERFORM PENDULUMS UNLESS DIRECTED TO DO SO BY YOUR SURGEON OR MEDICAL STAFF\*\***

If you are unsure if any of the exercises provided in these guidelines are the ones recommended for your recovery please call clinical staff at Orthopedic and SportsMedicine Clinic of Fairbanks. Our staff will be able to confirm instructions specific to your surgery and protocols or speak with your surgeon directly.

## Getting Dressed and Daily Hygiene Activities

You will wear your sling or immobilizer over your clothes. Always dress your operated arm first and undress it last. You will probably need help with washing and dressing yourself for the first few weeks, so it is important you have support during this recovery period. Your physical therapist will go through this with you in PT, or clinical staff will walk you through a physical demonstration 48 hours after your surgery.

You will require loose clothing that preferably buttons down the front or tank tops with large sleeves. Avoid clothing with small buttons, hooks and zips. Ladies may find a bra uncomfortable and may prefer to wear a strapless bra, built in bra tank tops, or a front fastening bra. Track pants or pants with elastic waists are advised for the first few weeks. Consider slip-on, easy fitting shoes. There are also options online for side-snap clothing to assist in ease of daily living activities on many sites such as Amazon that you can purchase prior to your surgery. **Side snap clothing is not a requirement for your surgery.**

Before starting any daily living activities, ensure you sit on the bed or on a chair before removing your sling or immobilizer. If sponge bathing, have a bowl of water and toiletries nearby before undressing. It is very important any surgical dressing placed by clinical staff or your surgeon stays properly sealed and dry if not waterproof while performing these tasks. If you have a waterproof dressing that has started to peel, please contact clinical staff for assistance.

Depending on your surgery, your physician may allow you to remove the immobilizer for skin care. You will need another person to help you remove and reapply your sling. When removing the sling, remember to keep your upper arm close to your body. With good skin care, you can avoid skin irritation. Because there are two skin surfaces in direct contact, you will need to do the following skin care at least once or twice daily. Your upper arm must be held close to your body, so it is recommended that another person assist you. Loosen the arm strap and the wrist strap, wash and dry your underarm thoroughly, taking care not to get the sling wet. No powders, sprays, or chemicals are permitted at this time. Wash your under arm with warm soapy water, but dry thoroughly as moisture leads to chafing and rashes.

It is very important to wash under breasts or skin folds of the torso at least once daily. In addition, check for any skin irritation under the breasts or skin folds, as you are more susceptible during this recovery period while resting and recovering. Good skin care will reduce the possibility of skin irritation during a more sedentary time period. Place a washcloth or clean cotton pad under the breasts and/or skin folds if your skin becomes irritated. You may use gentle lotions or barrier creams if needed in non-surgical areas.

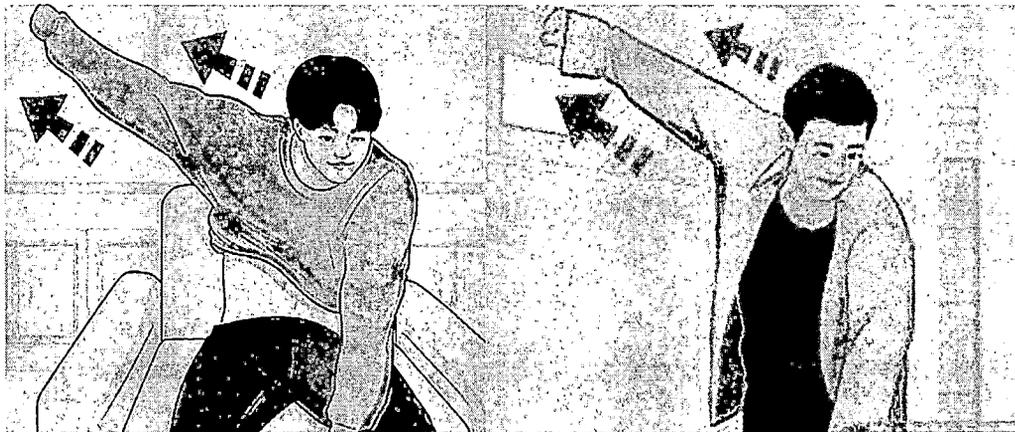
## Dressing



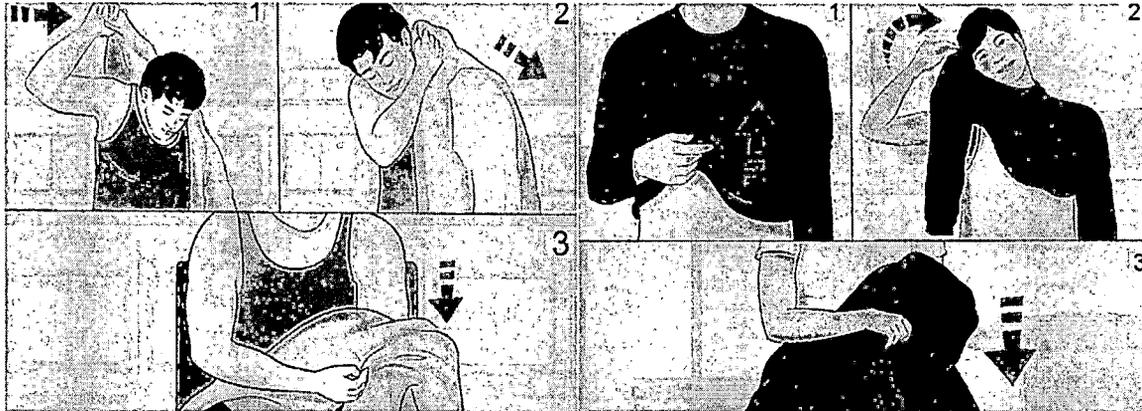
1. Sit on the edge of a chair, bed or stand with your arm supported on the inside of your leg. Slide your operated arm into the garment first using your good arm to assist. Do not assist with your operated arm, keep it relaxed and supported with either your lap or thigh.



2. Once this arm is fully in the sleeve bring the garment around your back or over your head and put the other arm in. Do not reach behind with your operated arm. The operated arm must be supported and relaxed during this process.



## Undressing

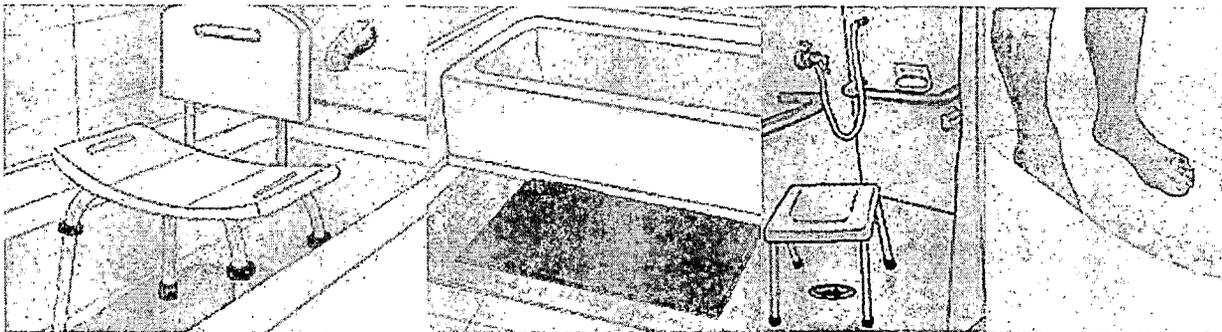


1. When undressing, sit on the edge of a chair, bed or stand with your arm relaxed and supported on the inside of your leg just as you would while getting dressed. Always start with your none operated arm and end with your operated arm. **Do not assist with your operated arm, keep it relaxed and supported by either your lap or thigh.**

It is important to plan ahead while performing these activities by placing your clothing within reach and in the appropriate direction. You can use a counter or the bed to lay your shirt facing away from you so you may dress your operated arm in first before donning a loose-fitting shirt over your head.

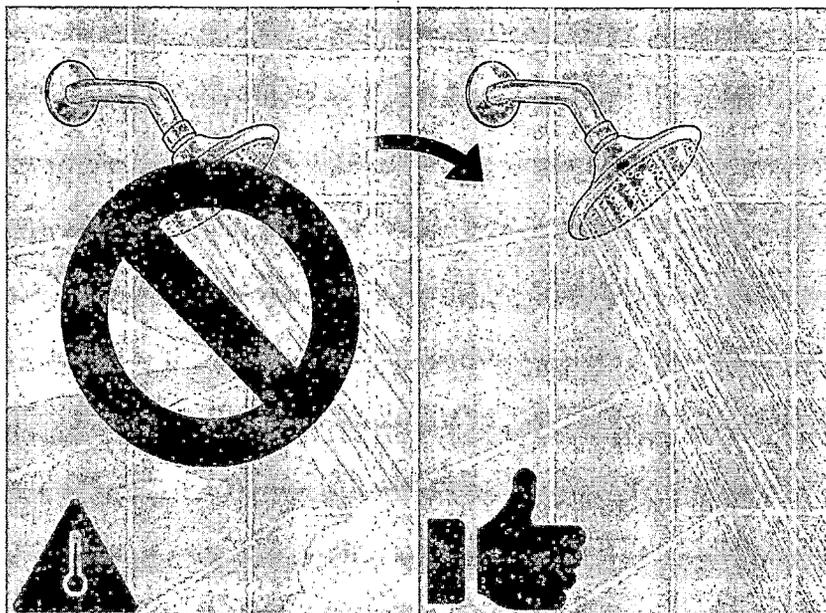
## Showering and Bathing

When you are cleared by your surgeon and well enough to shower, gather your clothes and place them nearby. You may feel a little weak or de-conditioned during the first few weeks after your surgery. Be mindful of not standing for long periods to avoid falls. Your physical therapist or clinical staff can advise you on the use of a shower stool or chair to sit on when in the shower. The equipment companies listed at the back of this handout may be able to provide supportive equipment if needed.



**When cleared to use the shower, here are some guidelines for these tasks.**

- While sitting or standing, lean forward at hips and let gravity take your surgical arm away from the body to wash under your arm, do not actively lift the arm away from the body.
- Do not lift your arm to comb or brush your hair.
- Do not use your surgical arm to reach above your head or outward from the body. A physical demonstration will be provided at your dressing change appointment.
- During bathing and dressing, you should have no active movement of the involved arm unless directed by your surgeon.
- It is advised you use a non-slip shower mat both in and out of the shower for safety.



- Avoid hot water entirely, using only lukewarm or cool water to prevent dizziness and sweating under your surgical dressing. Excessive heat can increase inflammation and cause pain or discomfort.
- Limit shower time to reduce heat exposure.
- Pain medication, stress, and physical weakness from surgery increase the likelihood of feeling faint.
- Drink fluids beforehand to help maintain blood pressure.

**Medication Log**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Medication</b>	<b>Dose Given</b>	<b><u>Frequency</u> <b>(how often to take the medication)</b></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>

**Equipment Companies**

**Access Alaska**

975 Van Horn Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Phone: (907) 479-7940

**Procure Home Medical Inc**

915 30th Ave STE 106, Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Phone: (907) 458-8912

**Walmart Pharmacy**

537 Johansen Expressway Fairbanks, AK 99709  
Phone: (907) 458-1033

**Walgreens Pharmacy**

530 Old Steese Hwy, Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Phone: (907) 457-9301

**Amazon is also a recommended online supplier**