

Warren Matthee

MB BCh (Wits), MRCS (England), MMed (Ortho Surg), FC Orth (SA)

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

Pr. No: 0444340

Physiotherapy Protocol – Shoulder Arthroscopy:

Rotator Cuff Repair

***** Postoperative physiotherapy will not be included in the hospital fee *****

This will be required to be submitted to your medical aid or paid separately

Recommendations following your surgery:

- **Activities of daily living:** For the first 6 weeks you must use your un-operated arm for activities of daily living. This includes making meals, snacks, drinks, personal care and light housework. **No heavy lifting** for 4 months.
- **Dressings:** You may remove any covering tape and/or padding from the shoulder 48 hours after the surgery but **do not remove the dressings (plasters)**.
- **Driving: No driving for six weeks** after a rotator cuff repair. Return to driving after your shoulder procedure will be individually tailored and based on when you would be able to safely and actively move your shoulder without assistance, and without causing yourself or others injury on the road. **It is illegal to drive while wearing a sling.**

Indications that you can drive are: Minimal pain (**you should not be on any painkillers**); Able to get in and out of car on your own without assistance; Able to put both arms on the steering wheel; No sling

- **Eating:** You may need assistance with eating after your operation as you will only be able to use your un-operated hand. When comfortable and as permitted, you may return to feeding yourself with both hands.
- **Follow-up:** Please discuss the need for further post-operative physiotherapy with Dr Matthee at your first follow-up appointment.
- **Getting dressed:** You will find it easier to use front-opening clothes and clothes which are loose-fitting. **DRESS the operated arm FIRST:** Bend your body forward to allow your arm to gently hang away from your body with the effects of gravity and pull the shirt up and over the operated arm. Only use the un-operated arm to do the buttons up. **UNDRESS your operated arm LAST:** Take the un-operated arm out the shirt first and then slip the shirt off the operated arm.

- **Ice packs:** Ice is an effective analgesic. It can be used over the shoulder to help with pain and local inflammation. Can be used 3 – 5 x per day, in a thin towel for 15 minutes at a time. Do not apply for long periods or directly to the skin.
- **Medication:** Take pain medication as prescribed. This will minimize protective muscle spasm and allow for a speedy return to activities of daily living and facilitate rehabilitation.
- **Sleeping:** Your sling should be kept on while you are in bed. You may find it more comfortable to sleep on your back (or the unaffected side) initially, with a pillow under your operated arm for support. Support the shoulder with a pillow under the elbow and arm.
- **Sling:** To be worn for 6 weeks for comfort (this may vary depending on the procedure). The sling is essential when walking or sleeping. You may remove the sling to shower, dress or during exercises. You may also remove the sling when sitting or lying where your arm is supported by a pillow.
- **Walking/stairs:** You should get out of bed and move around as much as you can. With your arm immobilised in a sling you can be unstable, which could lead to a stumble and/or a fall. Exercise extra caution during this period. Hold the railing with the un-operated arm while going up and down stairs.
- **Washing: Showering ONLY, no bathing.** Although they are waterproof, **the dressings / plasters should not be soaked.** When washing under your arm or dressing, remove your sling and straighten your elbow. Bend over at the waist and let the arm passively swing away from the body. It is safe to wash under the arm in this position. Use a face cloth to wipe your armpit. Ideally try to use a hand-pump soap dispenser as this only needs one hand to operate. A towelling gown can be helpful getting dry after a shower.
- **Work:** Please discuss this with Dr Matthee at your first post-operative follow-up appointment. Return to work depends on the procedure that was performed and the nature of your work. If possible, try to arrange to start on light duties.

Home Exercise Program: Perform 2-3 X per day, remove sling for exercises

***** Precautions *****

DO NOT raise your arm or elbow away from your body

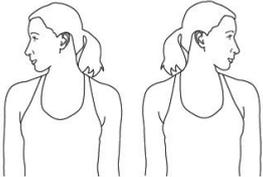
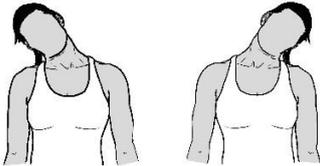
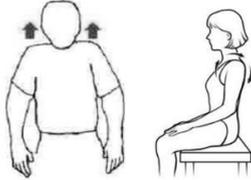
DO NOT reach behind your body

DO NOT try to lift anything (bending your arm at the elbow is OK)

DO not support your body weight on your hands

DO NOT force a stretch or do any sudden movements

Do your exercises in a pain-free range of movement

Neck Rotation	Ear to Shoulder	Shoulder Shrugs and Rolls
Look over you right shoulder; Look over your left shoulder	Take your right ear to your right shoulder; Take your left ear to your left shoulder	Shrug shoulder up to your ears; Push shoulders away from your ears
5 repetitions each side	5 repetitions each side	5 repetitions each
		
Shoulder Retractions	Pendulum Exercises	Elbow and Hand
Pull your shoulder blades back towards each other and hold for 5 seconds, then relax	Lean forward and place one hand on a table for support. Let your other arm hang freely at your side. Gently swing your arm in a circular motion, clockwise and anti-clockwise	Bend and straighten your elbow (if a biceps tenodesis was performed, use your other arm to do the movement) Pump your hand for circulation. Squeeze your hand, hold for 3 sec then release
5 repetitions	10 circles	5 repetitions
	