

Shoulder Dislocation

Rehabilitation advice from NBT Orthopaedic team

This exercise sheet is designed to guide you through the next few months with some simple exercises to gradually increase your movement, decrease your pain and steadily improve your function.

Removing your sling

The sling is to keep you comfortable over the first few days – you should remove it regularly to move your elbow, wrist and hand. Start weaning from your sling, the easiest way is to gradually use the sling less and less over a few days. You should aim to stop using it by 3 weeks.

Using your arm

Try and use your arm as normally as possible – avoiding heavy lifting and the “throwing or surrender position” (see picture).

Pain relief

It is important to keep your shoulder comfortable and use your pain relief as necessary. You can also use warmth and cool to help with this.

Supporting the weight of your arm on cushions or pillows whenever sitting can make your shoulder feel more comfortable.

Exercises

Start the “early” exercises as soon as you are able – these allow you to move your elbow, wrist and hand.

The pendulum position can also help with washing and dressing, but may also help your shoulder feel more comfortable.

Once your shoulder feels more comfortable in a few days start the “early shoulder exercises” – start with your elbow bent and using the other arm to help. Gradually progress to elbow straight and lifting the arm without help.

As your movement improves and if you can comfortably lift your arm to touch the top of your head – progress to the “strengthening exercises”. Practice 1 x a day until your arm is tired.



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In the early stages **avoid the surrender position.**



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Pendulum

Stand beside a table, leaning on your forearm.

Gently let your other arm hang relaxed down



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Stand.

Slowly bend and straighten your elbow.

Repeat 5 times



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Stand with your elbow bent and palm turned down.

Turn your palm up and down rotating your forearm.

Keep your upper arm next to your body.

Repeat 5 times.



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Practice regularly throughout the day:

- 1) Move your wrist up and down
- 2) Make a full fist and fully straighten your fingers

Early shoulder exercises

These are designed to gently get your shoulder moving – take care to avoid the surrender position. Practice little and often through the day.

If these are too difficult to start with – practice the same movement but use your unaffected arm to help.



Stand up straight with your arms by your sides.

Lift your arm forwards as far as is comfortable with the thumb leading the movement. Lower the arm back to the starting position.

This can be made easier by bending the elbow or using the other arm to help.



Stand up straight with your arms by your sides.

Lift your arm to the side and up as far as is comfortable with the thumb leading the movement. Lower the arm back to the starting position.

This can be made easier by bending the elbow or using the other arm to help.



Sit or stand. Keep upper arms close to the sides and elbows at right angles.

Turn forearms outwards.

Strengthening exercises

Practice these exercises 1 x a day, working until your arm feels tired.

Start with just the weight of your arm and when that is easy start using a small weight e.g. ½ filled bottle of water or can of beans.

Gradually increasing your numbers over time.

Stand or sit. Hold your arm close to your body with your elbow at a right angle.



Shoulder Press

Stand tall. Hold weights at shoulder height with your elbows pointing to the sides. Press the weights up to straight arms. Return to the starting position in a controlled manner.

Note: try not to shrug your shoulders.

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Lie on your side. Place a folded towel between your upper arm and side.

Bend your elbow to 90 degrees. Hold a weight in your hand.

Lift your hand up and slowly back down.

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Stand next to a wall. Place your hands on the wall, slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and fingers pointing upwards. Body is in a straight line.

Keep body in a straight line and shoulders down. Bend your arms and lower your chest towards the wall. Straighten your arms and push back away from the wall.

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Return to Sport

These exercises will help you get back to your normal full activities.

Returning to sport may take you up to 6 months.

You should consider a phased return, return to training environment first prior to returning to a competitive environment.

Gradually increasing your contact and overhead activities.

If the shoulder does dislocate again – please seek the appropriate medical support.