Proximal Humerus Fracture

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.

Sling

For the first 3 weeks keep your arm in the sling 24 hours a day, only coming out to do the exercses.

Take your arm out every few hours to practice the first set of exercises.

<u>Pendulum</u>

Stand beside a table, leaning on your forearm.

Gently let your other arm hang relaxed down. Let your arm swing gently away from your body. Repeat 5 times

Sitting.

Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold approx. 2-3 seconds.

Repeat 5 times. Repeat to other side.

Stand – remove the sling – keep your upper arm close to the body.

Slowly bend and straighten your elbow.

Repeat 5 times

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Support your forearm on a table as shown:

1) Make a full fist and fully straighten your fingers
2) Slowly lift your wrist up and down as far as comfortable.

Repeat 5 times.

From 3 weeks

Removing your sling

Start weaning from your sling, the easiest way is to gradually use the sling less and less over a few days. You may find it useful to continue to wear it initially if you are out and about in a busy environment or for a long period of time. Continue to support the weight of your arm on cushions or pillows whenever you are sitting, this will help to keep your arm comfortable.

Using your arm

You can start using your arm gradually when you come out of the sling, light activities no more weight than a cup of tea. All movements should be with your elbow bent and within your field of vision. It is important at this early stage not to lift anything heavy and avoid lifting the arm straight in front of you or out to the side.

Pain relief

Your shoulder may feel comfortable while you have been in the sling and you may have stopped taking your pain relief. It is not unusual at this stage, when you start increasing your activities and exercises, that your shoulder may become more uncomfortable. It is important at this stage to take your pain relief if necessary, to allow you to gradually get your shoulder moving and increase your activity level. You can use warmth or cool to help with your pain if necessary as well.

Exercises

You can start these next few exercises. Start to gradually increase how far you can move your arm and use your injured arm to do more of the work until you can do the exercises without the help of the un-injured arm.

Sit or stand with both elbows at right angles. Place a rolled towel between your elbow and side. Hold a stick with both hands.

Slowly turn the arm outwards using the stick to help, as far as comfortable.

Lie on your back with your elbows bent. Hold one wrist with your other hand.

Lift the upper arm as far as comfortable assisting with your other hand.

Repeat ____ times.

Sit or stand. Place your hands on a table – with a towel under both arms.

Slide your hands along the table as far as you can. Let the un-injured arm help and the table will take the weight of the arm.

Stand near the kitchen work surface or high table.

Place both hands on surface.

Gently walk away from your hands – gently moving your body away from your arm.

From 6 weeks

Continue with the previous exercises but start increasing how much you use your affected arm.

From 8 weeks

Start a gentle strengthening programme as per the next set of exercises.

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Stand or sit. Hold your arm close to your body with your elbow at a right angle. Try to move your hand outward, resisting the movement with the other hand. There should be no movement.

Hold 5 seconds.

Repeat 5 times

Stand or sit. Hold your arm close to your body with your elbow at a right angle. Try to move your hand inward, resisting the movement with the other hand. There should be no movement.

Hold 5 seconds.

Repeat 5 times

From 12 weeks

Start thinking about some gentle strengthening exercises – start with low weight like a bottle of water with a small amount of water in it.

Sit or stand.

Lift your shoulders – slowly let go.

Repeat ____ times.

Stand or sit holding your hands on your chests with weights in your hands.

Slowly lift both arms from your chest straight up and bring back down.

Repeat _____ times.

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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 small weight in your hand.

Lift your hand up and slowly back down.

Repeat _____ times.

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Stand facing a wall with your arms straight and hands on the wall.

Do push ups against the wall keeping your body in a straight line.

Repeat ____ times.