

Other Tips to help recovery in the early days after injury.

In the first 72 hours after injury avoid **H.A.R.M.** (Heat, Alcohol, Running or other vigorous exercise, and Massage).

Reaching and lifting -Try to minimise excessive reaching by stepping towards things. If you have to lift, use both arms and hold the load close to your body.

Sleeping – this can be difficult after injury. Try to lie on your good shoulder. Perhaps use pillows under your affected arm, and also behind you to stop rolling onto the painful side. Another option may be a more upright sleeping position.

Sport – avoid contact sports until you have restored full movement and strength. Prepare your shoulder for return to sport by practicing sports related activities e.g. throwing/catching.

Further treatment – if you are not noticing improvement in shoulder pain and function please liaise with your GP/Chartered Physiotherapist.

Reattendance at ED is suggested if you notice any of the following - worsening shoulder pain/swelling, pain developing in both shoulders, feeling unwell/feverish with worsening shoulder pain.

Further Information – Arthritis UK : Shoulder pain, www.shoulder.doc.co.uk, www.nhs.uk/live-well,

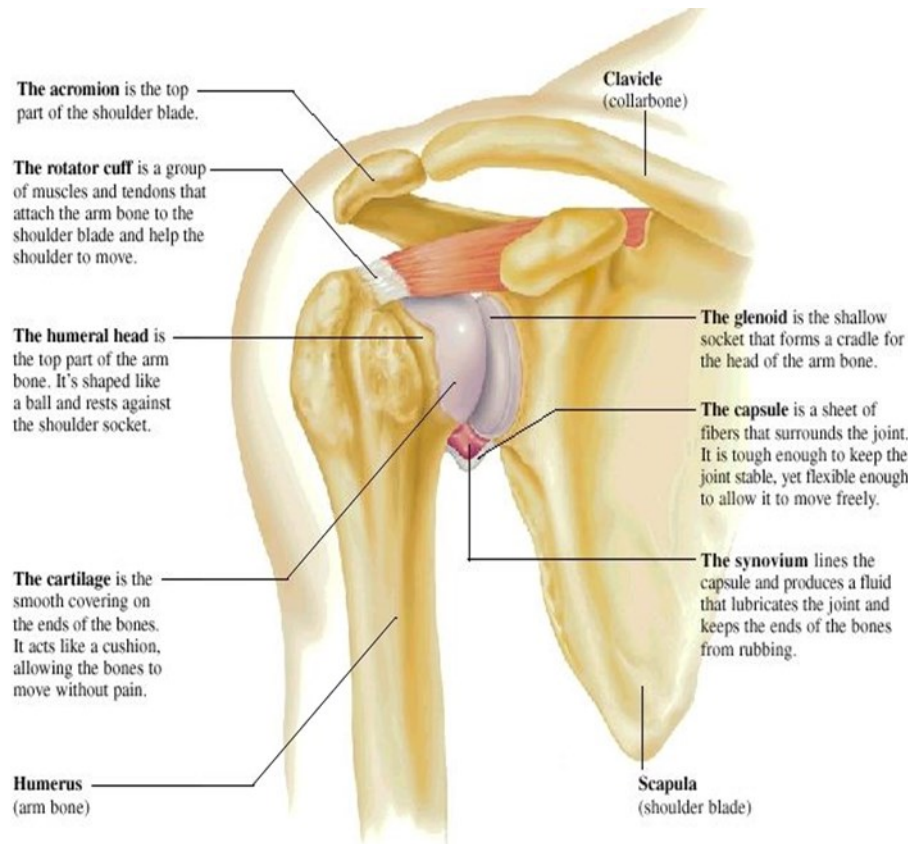
Early management of Shoulder Pain and Injury.

A patient information guide



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The Shoulder Joint



The shoulder is the most mobile joint in the body . It is a ball and socket joint supported by a capsule and a series of muscles and tendons.



3 -With your arm supported on a table allow your arm to slide forwards and backwards and diagonally side- ways



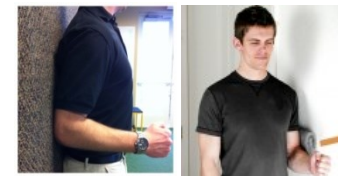
4 -In a standing position rest your hands on a table. Try shifting your weight from side to side and forward and back.



5 -In sitting with your hand on a table make circular movements "wiping the table"



6 -Try pushing your arm outwards/backwards / forwards against a wall. Aim for 30% effort and hold for 5 seconds



7 – In lying- hold a stick or brush-shaft in your arms. Use your good arm to assist your affected side upwards before controlling it back to start position. Repeat this in a diagonal direction also.

If required, anti-inflammatory medication should be commenced 3 days after injury.

Optimism – try to maintain a positive outlook. This has been shown to have positive effects on pain levels.

Shoulder exercises – these can help movement and strength. **Repeat x 3 times per day, x 5 repetitions of each. Start with exercises 1-5 initially before adding exercises 6 & 7.** Progress by adding an extra repetition each day. You may find slight discomfort with these but **they should not cause significant pain.** If this is the case, reduce the number of exercises you are doing or stop the exercise causing most pain.



1 – try shrugging and rolling your shoulders.



2 – while leaning over a table, let your affected arm hang downwards. Try to let your arm swing backwards and forwards, side to side or in circular directions.

Why does shoulder pain occur?

Shoulder pain is common and can result from a number of causes.

Shoulder Sprain - Shoulder Sprain can follow a fall onto the shoulder or banging it against something. Overstretching the shoulder e.g. during sport can be a further cause of pain. Shoulder sprain is often associated with injury of the ligaments at the shoulder.

Rotator Cuff Disorders - Repetitive work (especially heavy) can sometimes cause irritation of muscle and tendons (i.e. where muscle attaches to the shoulder). These muscles are collectively called The Rotator Cuff . Particular movements and positions typically worsen these symptoms. In some instances the muscles around the shoulder can be partly or completely torn .

Degenerative Pain – the shoulder, like other joints can be subject to wear and tear after years of use. Pain can result from wear.

Frozen Shoulder – sometimes this diagnosis can be given to patients with shoulder pain. This condition does not develop over the course of a few days. Typically the shoulder develops pain and stiffness before which tends to eventually resolve. This process can take many months.

Calcific Tendonitis – this is a very painful condition which occurs when calcium deposits cause inflammation of shoulder tendons. The onset of pain with this condition is usually very rapid and patients often require a sling for relief.

Other sources – shoulder pain can sometimes indicate pain being referred from another part of the body. Commonly problems in the neck can explain symptoms felt in the shoulder region.

What are the signs and symptoms of shoulder injury? The most common symptom of injury is pain. Stiffness and loss of normal function are also frequently seen. In some circumstances patients may notice heat, redness or bruising in the area of pain/injury.

How long will it take for my shoulder to improve? In most cases shoulder problems will ease within weeks. A good level of recovery can be achieved by six weeks after injury. For more complex or chronic cases, recovery can take months.

Do I need a sling? This very much depends on pain levels and your specific injury. If you have only slight pain there is usually no need for a sling. If your pain levels are very high, a sling perhaps for up to 3 days after injury may be of benefit. Protecting your arm in a sling for too long after injury can add to stiffness and slow your recovery.

Do I need an X ray or scan? The mechanism of your injury and presenting symptoms will indicate the need for X ray. These are often carried out on attendance in the Emergency Department. Scans may be indicated if symptoms are not improving. This is often recommended by the Orthopaedic service.

Can I drive? If you are not able to safely drive your vehicle you should not be driving. Things to consider are - having sufficient movement and strength to use the steering- wheel, gear-stick and hand-brake. You should not drive if you have been placed in a sling or you are unable to produce an emergency manoeuvre.

What about work? Ability to return to work is dependent on the job you carry out. For jobs that require significant heavy lifting, reaching and overhead work an early return to full duties may not be possible. You should liaise with your employer to discuss if there are any “lighter duties” you may be able to do as your shoulder recovers. If your job does not involve these issues and you are confident with the demands of your job then an early return is encouraged.

What else can I do to help my recovery?

Ice/Heat – ice can have good pain relieving effects and can be useful immediately after injury especially the first 24 hours. This could take the form of a bag of frozen peas applied in a damp towel for 10 minutes. This can be repeated regularly through the day. Heat e.g. a hot shower is not usually helpful in the initial days after injury, but can be useful later in the condition especially before exercising.

Medication – painkillers or anti- inflammatories can be helpful. Liaise with your G.P. or pharmacist regarding these.