

Sports Therapy
Manual Therapy
Electrotherapy
Manipulation
Rehabilitation
Pre-habilitation
Clinical Pilates
Pre-Season Screening
Exercise Prescription
Massage

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AUSTRALIAN
PHYSIOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION

Member

POST-OPERATIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY INFORMATION

AC Joint Stabilisation/Fixation of Clavicle

Surgery:

After surgery, you will go home with a waterproof dressing covering your wound. Although this may appear minor, the trauma to your shoulder is still significant and thus it needs to be given opportunity to recover.

Your surgeon has stabilised your AC Joint or Clavicle, and these repaired structures need protection following the surgery to heal properly. **You must avoid actively elevating your arm for 4 weeks.** By lifting your arm actively, too much stress is placed on the healing tissue and can cause damage. If in doubt, keep the arm across your body most of the time.

Use of Sling:

The sling will be required to rest and support your shoulder for a period of 4-6 weeks following surgery. The sling supports the weight of your arm, preventing this stress being carried by the healing tissues of your shoulder. During this time you must remove your arm from the sling 4-5 times per day to perform the following exercises as demonstrated by your physiotherapist. These exercises help maintain mobility in your arm and shoulder and prevent stiffness.

Ice:

Continue to ice the top of your shoulder covering the surgical site, for 20mins, 3-4 times per day for up to 3 days post surgery. Always place a thin wet cloth between your skin and the ice pack to prevent burns.

Exercises: The following exercises are to be performed 4 times per day

1.Elbow, Wrist and Hand Movements

Be sure to keep the elbow, wrist and hand mobile by bending and straightening all joints. It is much easier to keep these joints moving now than to let them get stiff. You can also begin gripping a rolled towel or tennis ball to keep your arm muscles strong and begin activity around the shoulder.

2.Shoulder (scapula) protraction/ retraction

Pull shoulder blades back and pinch them together. Keep shoulders down away from ears. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



3.Pendular Swings

Bend forward from the hips and use your good arm to cradle and support your operated arm. Allow the arms to hang heavy. Swing the arms gently forward/ backwards, side to side and in circles 10 times in each direction



4. Assisted shoulder flexion

Cradle your injured arm in your uninjured arm.

Raise both together in front using the uninjured arm to assist the injured arm. Move only to the point of pain. Make sure that you don't let your shoulder "hitch" upwards when elevating the arm. You can look in the mirror to monitor this. Do not elevate past 90°. Repeat 10 times

Variation – The exercise can be performed in sitting or lying on your back



Bandage/ Dressings

The wounds will be covered by waterproof dressings prior to discharge from hospital. You need to leave these on until your review with your surgeon. Once the wound has healed sufficiently (7-10 days), you are able to shower/ swim without the waterproof dressings.

Further Rehabilitation/ Return to Normal Activity

It is advisable for you to attend a physiotherapist for a progressive regime of exercises to mobilise and strengthen your shoulder for return to normal function and/ or sport. The shoulder is a complicated joint that requires intricate muscle function to perform normally, especially for the demands of overhead sporting or work activities, and physiotherapy can help guide your return to these activities. Your surgeon will advise you at the time of follow up review when you should commence further physiotherapy. This is usually at about the 4-6 week mark post-op.

Return to full sporting activities is usually between 3-6 months, depending upon the nature of your chosen sport and how well your strength and movements have progressed. Return to work is very dependant on your occupation and it's requirements.