

Sports Therapy  
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## POST-OPERATIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY INFORMATION

### ELBOW ARTHROSCOPE

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#### Surgery:

Many different procedures can be performed via elbow arthroscopy. Superficially there are only small puncture marks made by the surgical instruments and these have been closed by steri-strips or a single stitch. Although this may seem only minor, the surgery inside the joint is more traumatic and must be given full opportunity to recover. This recovery is greatly dependent on your post-operative routine.

#### Use of the arm and care of your elbow following surgery:

During the first few days after your operation, your elbow is recovering from the trauma of surgery, and you need to take care not to “over-do-it”. This means resting, keeping your elbow elevated and minimise use of the arm where possible. **If you notice excessive pain or swelling in your elbow it is time to slow down a little.**

You may or may not have a sling, depending on your surgeon’s preference. If you find you have a sling it is required to rest and support the elbow for a period of 2-3 days following surgery. The sling is to be worn when the elbow gets tired or sore, or when out in public and crowds in that first week. Otherwise you may use the arm for light activities around the house. If anything hurts or aggravates the elbow then stop.

#### Elevation:

Elevation of your elbow in the early days post-op is the most important way to reduce swelling, therefore reducing pain and aiding tissue healing. The elbow should stay at the level of the heart or above the level of the heart, and the best way to do this is to rest it on a couple of pillows.

#### Ice:

Ice has the effect of controlling inflammation and swelling which your elbow is prone to after surgery. Always use a thin wet cloth between ice and your skin. For the first 2 weeks after your surgery, try to ice your elbow for 15 mins 3 - 4 times/day, especially after your exercises.



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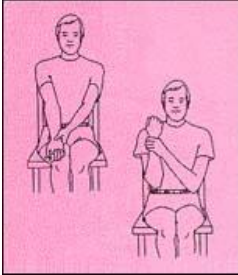
Member

## Exercises:

The following exercises are to be performed 4-5 times each day in order to maintain movement in your operated arm.

### 1. Elbow Movements

Start to use your elbow by gently bending and stretching it. These movements should be comfortable and not provoke pain.

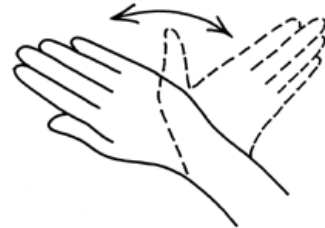


Sit straight up in a chair and hold your operated wrist with the other hand. Slowly bend the elbow up towards your chest then straighten forearm out as much as you can.  
**Repeat 10 times**

### 2. Wrist movements

Start to gently move your wrist back and forth, side to side and turn palm up and down. These movements should stay within the limits of pain and the restriction of your bandage. Do not force these movements.

**1 minute each**



### 3. Shoulder movements

You should keep your shoulder moving so that it doesn't stiffen up. Cradle your injured arm and raise both up together in front so that the arms come above your head. **Repeat 10 times**



## Bandage/ Dressings

You will usually have a crepe bandage around your elbow following your arthroscopy which should be removed after 3 days or **as indicated by your surgeon**. You need to keep this dry in this time. After this, replace the crepe with a "tubigrip" bandage. This should be worn until swelling is no longer present.

## Further Rehabilitation/ Return to Normal Activity

Often you will be required to attend physiotherapy for a progressive regime of exercises to mobilise and strengthen your elbow for return to normal function and/ or sport. The elbow 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 whether or not you will be required to have further physiotherapy.