

# **Protocol for Shoulder Rehabilitation**

## **Shoulder Arthroscopy and Rotator Cuff Repair**

### **Phase 1: 0-2 weeks**

#### **Day 1**

Wound care as outlined on the Shoulder Arthroscopy Rehabilitation page

An abduction splint (which holds the arm away from the body) will be applied before you wake up from the operation.

Do not remove this splint on day one

Do not attempt to lift the arm off the splint

You will need assistance to hold the arm for washing etc. The splint can be replaced by a large rolled up towel under the armpit for showering. Do not actively lift the arm up to position the towel

**Do not attempt any antigravity exercise until 4 weeks**

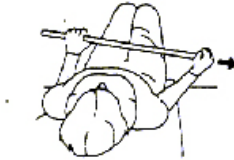
**Do not remove the splint until instructed to do so**

#### **Day 2**

Start gentle exercises. To start with do them lying down. As you get better at them you may try them sitting. You must keep the arm out to the side as if it was in the splint. It is possible to leave the wedge in place to help you do this.



Use the good arm to raise the operated arm above head height as far as comfort allows. Gently lower the arm again so that it is supported by the splint. Repeat 10 times 3 times a day



This exercise is usually easier sitting up. Keep the wedge in place and the elbow tucked firmly into the splint. Use the good arm and a stick to push the operated hand away from the body. Repeat 10 times 3 times a day.

The purpose of these exercises is to stop the shoulder from becoming too stiff.

If you cannot manage these do not worry as formal rehabilitation will start at week 4 when the sling is removed.

### **Phase 2: 4-8 weeks**

You will be seen in the clinic at 4 weeks

You may remove the splint at 4 weeks

The full range of motion exercises as outlined on Physio instruction pages 1 & 2 can be started

Antigravity exercises may start once good range of motion and shoulder control is obtained

You will need a physiotherapist to help you at this stage

You will be seen in the clinic at 12 weeks

### **Phase 3: 12+ weeks**

You will be seen in clinic and the shoulder function assessed at 12 weeks

If good anti-gravity control has been obtained resistance exercises may start

Do not worry if you are not quite ready for this yet

**6 months**

You will be seen in clinic for the power of the rotator cuff to be assessed

If you have not started, you can start strengthening the cuff at this stage. 9 Months

You will be seen at 9 months to assess your progress

**1 year**

You will be seen in the clinic for the range of motion and power to be assessed

If you are doing well you will be discharged from the clinic