

Orthopaedic Department
York teaching hospital

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the Fracture Care Team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Physiotherapist.

You have sustained a fracture to your shoulder.

About your injury: The shoulder is a ball and socket joint and you have fractured the ball part. The shoulder joint does not respond well to being injured and longstanding stiffness is almost inevitable. Following this type of injury you may never be able to fully lift the arm straight up in the air again. The main aim is to regain enough movement to perform day to day activities.

Healing: This normally takes between 6-12 weeks to heal.

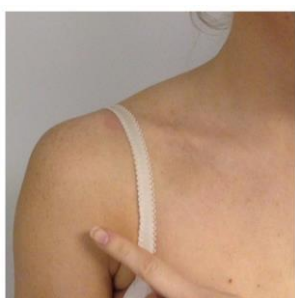
Pain: Take pain killers as prescribed.
You may find it more comfortable to sleep propped up with pillows.

Using your arm: It is important to keep the shoulder moving to prevent stiffness but not to aggravate your injury. Follow the management plan below.

Follow Up: The fracture is in a good position and only has a small chance of moving. You will see a Shoulder Specialist 2 weeks after your injury. You will have another x-ray and they will assess your shoulder and guide your rehabilitation.

If you have not received this appointment within one week of receipt of this letter please contact us via details below.

Picture of injury:



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.

Or if you are experiencing pain and symptoms anywhere else, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, please also get in touch using the telephone or e-mail details at the bottom of this letter.

York Virtual Fracture Clinic Contact details:

Phone: 01904 726575

Scarborough Trauma Assessment and
Treatment Unit (TATU):

01723 342021 / 07385 463781

Email: virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk

Please follow the management plan below

What to expect:

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wear the sling all the time – even in bed at night. ✓ Remove the sling for personal hygiene and exercises every day. ✓ Start your exercises straight away, ideally within the first 72 hours. It may take a few days of practice to become comfortable with the pendulum exercises.
3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You will have an appointment with the Specialist. ✓ Continue to wear the sling ✓ Start Stage 2 Exercises ✗ Do not lift your elbow above shoulder height as this may cause pain.
6 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The fracture is largely healed. ✓ Try not to use the sling. ✓ Begin normal light activities with the arm and shoulder. ✓ Increase movement using the Stage 3 exercises. ✓ Increase your day to day activities. ✗ Heavy tasks may cause discomfort. ✓ Start to lift your arm overhead if possible.

Advice for a new injury:

Cold packs: A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours ensuring the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

Rest: Try to rest your shoulder for the first 24-72 hours. However, it is important to maintain movement. Gently move your shoulder following the exercises shown. These should not cause too much pain. This will ensure your shoulder does not become stiff and it will help the healing process.

Smoking advice:

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

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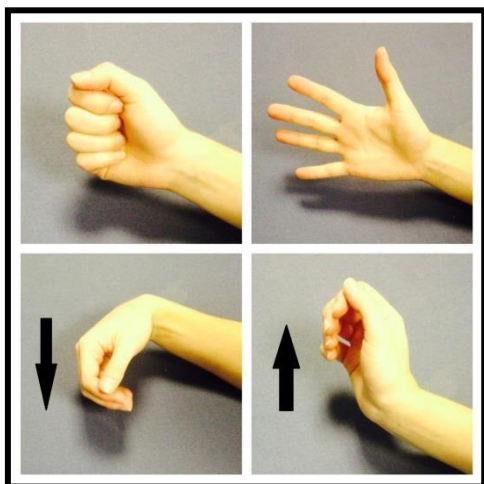
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Exercises

If you have stiffness in your elbow or hand from wearing the sling, you may wish to perform these exercises first. However, once they become easy you can start with the posture and pendulum exercises.

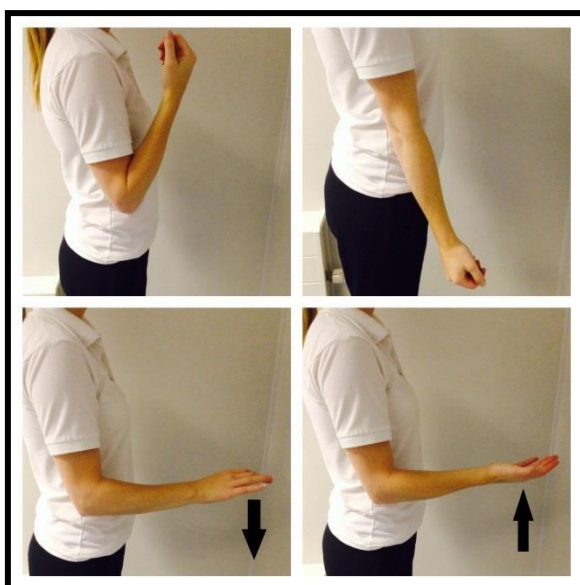
Initial Exercises to do 4-5 times a day:



Finger and wrist flexion and extension

Open and close your hand as shown 10-15 times.
Then move your wrist up and down 10-15 times.

After a few days, hold a soft ball/ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.
Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Elbow Bend to Straighten

Bend and straighten your elbow so you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.

Forearm Rotations

Put your elbow at your side. Bend it to 90 degrees. Slowly rotate your palm up and down until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.

Repeat 10-15 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.

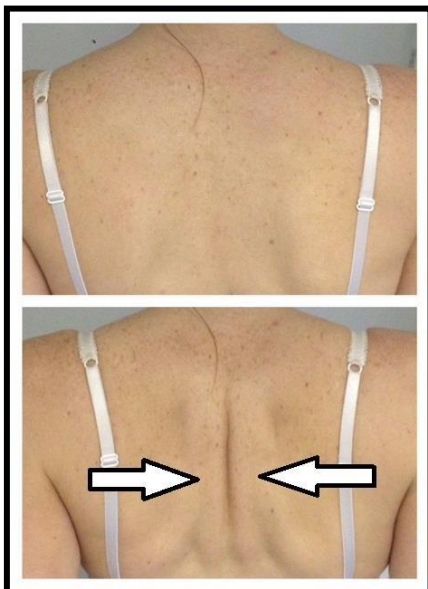
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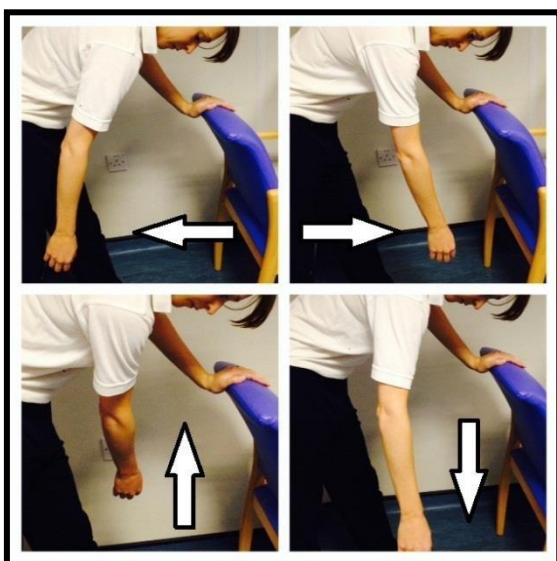
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Postural awareness

Bring your shoulders back and squeeze your shoulder blades together as shown in the picture. Do this with or without your sling on.

Hold the position for 20-30 seconds and repeat 5 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.



Shoulder pendulum exercises

Stand and lean forward supporting yourself with your other hand. Try to relax your injured arm and let it hang down.

1. Swing your arm slowly and gently forwards and backwards.
2. Swing your arm slowly and gently side to side.
3. Swing your arm slowly and gently in circles clockwise.

Continue for approximately 1-2 minutes in total provided there is no increase in symptoms.

Remember to try and relax your arm.

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Stage 2 Exercises

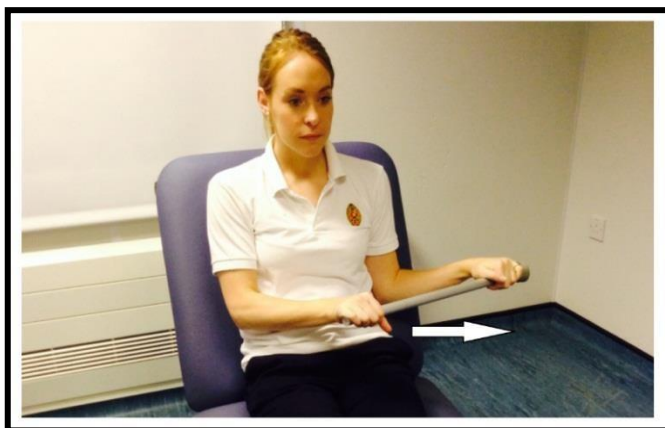
To start at 3 weeks post injury and to do 4-5 times a day:



Active assisted Shoulder flexion

Use your other hand to lift your arm up in front of you as shown in the pictures.

Repeat 10 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.



Active assisted External rotation

Keep the elbow of your injured arm tucked into your side and your elbow bent. Hold onto a stick/umbrella/golf club or similar. Use your unaffected arm to push your injured hand outwards. Remember to keep your elbow tucked in. Push until you feel a stretch.

If you don't have a stick you could simply hold the injured arm at the wrist and guide it outwards.

Hold for 5 seconds then return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times provided there is no increase in symptoms.

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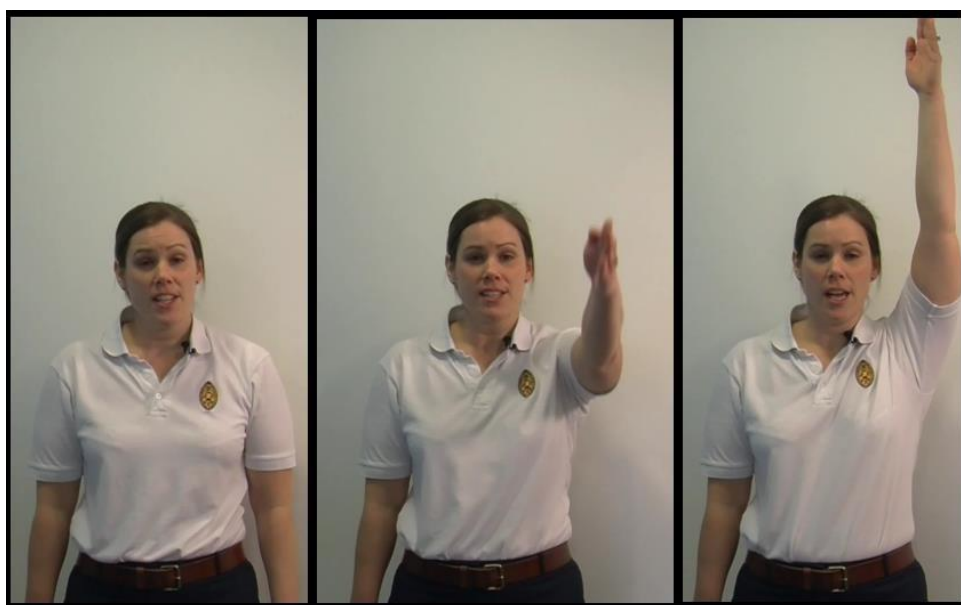
Stage 3 Exercises

To start at 3 weeks post injury and to do 4-5 times a day:

When you have regained full range of movement during the above exercises without pain you can start to do the exercises without the support of your other hand; this is known as active range of movement. Then when you have regained your full range of movement without the support of the other arm you can start to build up your regular activities.

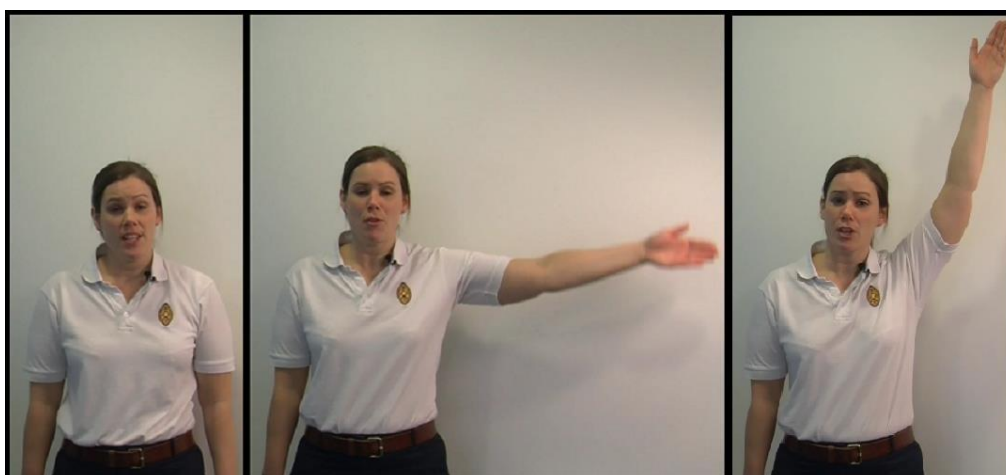
Active Forward flexion:

With your thumb facing up, try to move your arm up, keeping it close beside your body.



Active Abduction

With your thumb facing up and outwards, try to move your arm in a big arc out to the side.



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Active External rotation

With your elbow by your side, rotate your forearm outwards, keeping your elbow at about 90 degrees in flexion.



- ✓ Repeat all of these 3 exercises 10 times each, 4-5 times a day.
- ✓ Only go as far as you can naturally, without doing any trick movements to try and get further.
- ✓ The movement will increase over time and should not be forced.

If you are having problems progressing with the exercises and have a follow-up consultation booked, please do let the clinician know so that they can review the exercises and refer you on to Physiotherapy if necessary. If you are on an independent management programme, then please contact us using the number at the top of the letter so that we can also arrange physiotherapy for you.

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