

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)

You have told us you have a history of recurrent dislocations to this shoulder.



About your injury: The shoulder is a ball and socket joint. During a dislocation, the ball moves out of the socket. This puts strain on the tendons, ligaments and capsule (soft tissues) surrounding the joint.

Healing: It normally takes 6 to 12 weeks for this injury to heal.

Use the sling for the first 3 weeks to allow the soft tissues to recover. It is important to keep the shoulder moving to prevent stiffness but not so much that you make the injury worse.

Pain and numbness: Take pain killers as required (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose). You may find it more comfortable to sleep propped up with pillows.

You may get a small patch of numbness on the outside of the shoulder. This is normal and should improve over time.

Please contact us if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Pins and needles down your arm/hand
- you are struggling to move your arm at all
- you are experiencing pain and symptoms anywhere other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area

Follow up:

As your shoulder has dislocated more than once, you will be seen by a shoulder specialist in around 6 weeks. If you have not received this appointment within one week of receipt of this letter, please contact the fracture clinic on 01384456111 ext. 2220.

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

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

Please follow the management plan below

It is important that you do not progress onto the next set of exercises until the appropriate time lapse has happened.

Weeks since injury	Rehabilitation plan
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wear the sling all the time – even in bed at night ✓ Remove the sling for personal hygiene and to do your exercises ✓ Start the exercises in the ‘Initial Exercises’ section ✗ No lifting, activities or sport ✗ Avoid pushing and pulling activities ✗ Avoid the combined movement out to the side and turning outwards, such as reaching for a seatbelt.
3-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduce use of the sling to as little as possible/if at all ✓ Begin normal light activities with the arm and shoulder ✓ Increase movement as shown in the ‘Stage 2 exercises’ section ✓ You should be able to carry out most day to day activities ✗ Heavy or overhead tasks may cause discomfort ✗ Pushing and pulling activities may cause discomfort ✓ The specialist may give you further instructions regarding your rehabilitation
6+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Start exercises in the section ‘Stage 3 exercises’ as pain allows

Advice for a new injury:

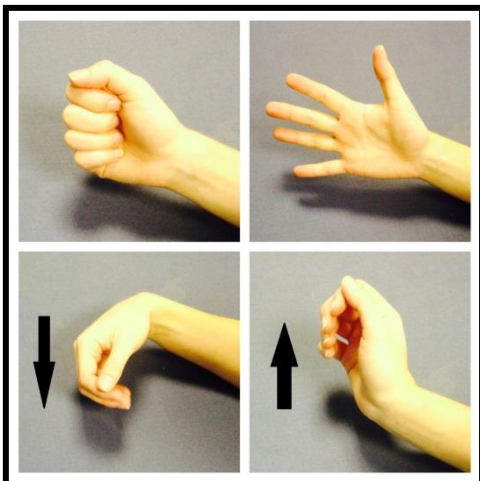
Cold packs: A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

Rest: Try to rest your shoulder for the first 24 to 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.

Stage 1 (Exercises 1-5)

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:

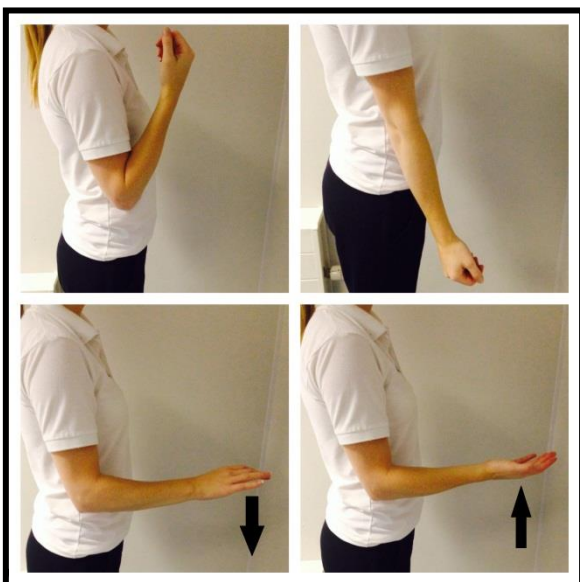


1. Finger and wrist flexion and extension

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 or a ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.

Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10-15 times. 4-5 times per day.



2. Elbow bend to straighten

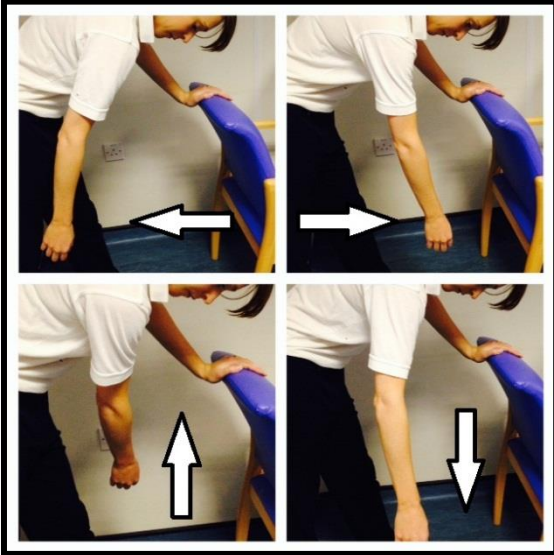
Bend and straighten your elbow so you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push into pain.

Repeat 10-15 times 4-5 times per day. This may feel tight and stiff, but this should not increase your pain.

3. 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 4-5 times per day. This may feel tight and stiff, but this should not increase your pain.

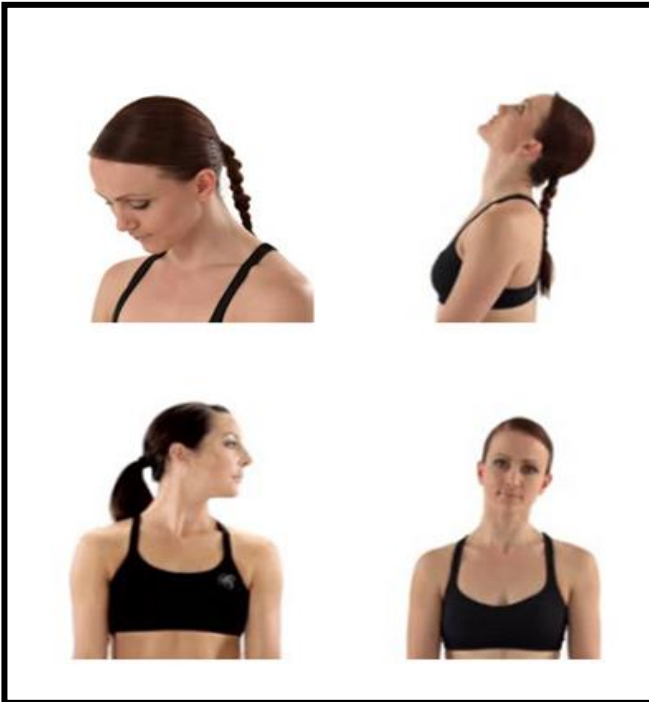


4. Shoulder pendulum exercises

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 to 2 minutes in total provided there is no increase in symptoms. Remember to try and relax your arm.



5. Neck Range of movement exercises

Wearing a sling can put strain through the neck. It is important you keep it moving to avoid stiffness.

Start in a seated position looking straight forward.

1. Look down towards the floor, look up towards the ceiling.
2. Look over your right shoulder, look over the left shoulder.
3. Take your right ear to your right shoulder, take your left ear to your left shoulder.

Keep your shoulders down at all times. **Repeat all exercises 10 times each direction, 4-5 times per day.**

Stage 2 exercises (start 3 weeks after your injury - exercises 6-11)

We now want to start working on shoulder movements more specifically. With all these exercises, only go as far as you can naturally. The movement should increase over time and should not be forced. You may initially feel uncomfortable moving the shoulder. This pain should settle within 30 minutes. If it is longer, you may have overdone it. If this is case, consideration should be given to reducing the range you are pushing into, or the repetitions you are performing.



6. Active assisted shoulder flexion

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

This may make your shoulder a little sore but this should settle within 30 minutes. Do not push through high intensity pain.

Repeat 10-15 times 4-5 times per day



7. Active Assisted Abduction

Hold a stick in both hands and hold it in front of you.

Push across your body with your good arm, lifting your affected arm out to the side.

Be careful not to hunch your shoulders up or twist your body around.

Control the movement back down carefully.

Repeat 5-10 times 4-5 times per day

This may make your shoulder a little sore but this should settle within 30 minutes. Do not push through high intensity pain.



8. Active external rotation

With your elbow by your side, rotate your forearm outwards, keeping your elbow at a 90 degrees bend.

Do not force the movement, be led by your pain levels.

Repeat 5-10 times. 4-5 times per day. This may make your shoulder a little sore but this should settle within 30 minutes.



9. Weight bearing

Stand up straight with a table in front of you at waist height. Place both hands on the surface with your fingers pointing forward.

Bring both of your shoulder blades back and down. Lean your weight forwards onto your hands, placing more weight through your weaker arm.

Keep your elbow straight and your shoulder blades still. Hold this position for 5 seconds then transfer weight back over again

Repeat 10 times 4-5 times per day



10. Isometric Internal Rotation

Stand straight with the elbow on your affected arm bent to 90 degrees. Place your other hand on the inside of your affected wrist.

Keeping your body still, push your wrist inwards into your good hand, resisting the movement.

Make sure you are trying to rotate the arm inwards, and not trying to push inwards with your elbow.

Hold this position for **5 seconds** and then relax.

Repeat 5-10 times 4-5 times per day



11. Isometric shoulder external rotation

Sit or stand up straight next to a wall.

Keep your affected arm by your side and bend your elbow to 90 degrees. Place the back of your wrist against the wall.

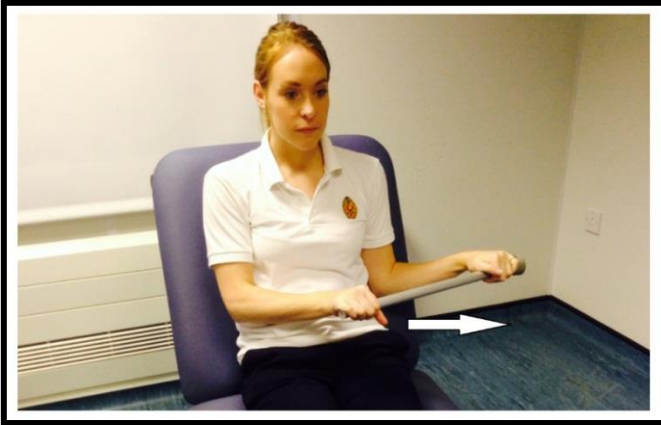
Without moving your body, press your wrist into the wall as if turning your forearm outwards.

Hold this position for **5 seconds** and then relax.

Repeat 5-10 times 4-5 times per day

Stage 3 exercises (start six weeks after your injury - exercises 12-13)

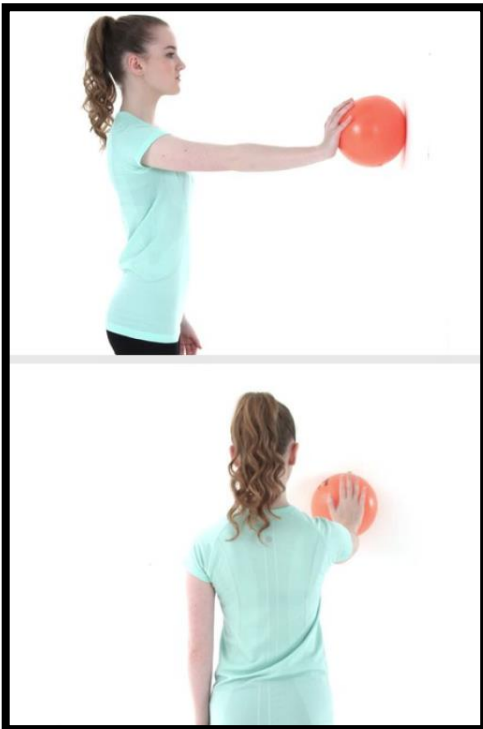
When you have regained your full range of movement without the support of the other arm, you can start to build up your regular activities.



Active 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.

Hold for **5 seconds** then return to the starting position. **Repeat 5-10 times 4-5 times per day**



Shoulder proprioception, ball on a wall

Stand up straight facing a wall

Take your arm to shoulder height with the ball in your hand, and press it against the wall.

Press lightly into the ball with the heel of your hand.

Your elbow should be straight, but not locked.

- a) Move the ball up and down, through your full available range.
- b) side to side and in small circles.

NB if it is too difficult to do the exercises standing up, the same action can be done on a table.

Keep your shoulder blades back

Repeat 5-10 times 4-5 times per day