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Initial Postoperative Shoulder Care and Exercise: Active Elbow Flexion Allowed.

- Videos are available on Dr. Witty's website.
- These exercises can be started immediately after surgery to facilitate recovery and work together with your protocol with the therapist.
- These can be done as many times a day as possible.

Abduction Sling Application: Please see the "Initial Postop Shoulder Care" Instruction form for details and pictures.

- Many patients have question about how to replace the sling without any assistance
- Set up the pillow and sling on a surface (table, bed, or similar).
- Make sure the sling is stuck to the pillow by the velcro
- Make sure the Velcro or clip fasteners that close the top part of the sling are open
- While protecting the injured shoulder with the opposite arm, lower the injured arm into the sling on the table or other surface
- You can now reach around your body as needed to fasten the straps

Showering: Please see the "Initial Postop Shoulder Care" Instruction form for details and pictures.

- It is often helpful to use a shower chair to protect the arm/shoulder and simplify showering.
- Unstrap the sling and gently let the arm drop to the side of the body.
- Once sling and pillow are off, lean toward the same side as the injured shoulder to create a space to get to the armpit.
- Use the non-injured arm for washing and drying.
- Reapply the sling and pillow as described above.

Scapular Retraction Exercise:

- These exercises should be done while the shoulder pillow and sling remain in place.
- Start with your non-injured arm at the side. The injured arm will remain in the sling. (Sling is not pictured below)

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- While keeping upper body/chest upright, slowly pull your shoulder blades together. Again, the operative arm should remain in the sling during this exercise.



- Pretend that you are pinching something in between the two shoulder blades.
- Once all the way retracted, hold them in position for 3 – 5 seconds to work the muscles
- Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions, 3 times a day.

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Shoulder Shrug Exercises:

- Your arm should stay in the sling as before
- While keeping your injured arm in the sling, shrug your shoulders as if you are trying to touch the tips of your shoulders to your ears.



- Hold for a few seconds and then relax.
- Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions, 3 times a day.

Elbow Active Flexion and Active Extension:

- The sling needs to be loosened for these exercises.
- Open the sling and allow the arm to fall to the side and hang freely.



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- Gently bend (flex) the elbow as far as you can taking about 3 – 5 seconds to do so. Only use the opposite arm as needed for comfort and/or support.



- Then slowly straighten (extend) the elbow all the way over 3 – 5 seconds



- Perform 10 – 20 reps 3 times a day.

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Wrist Flexion and Extension:

- The arm can remain in the sling or be done out of the sling.
- Simply extend and flex the wrist back and forth against gravity.



- Perform about 10 – 20 reps 3 times a day.

Hand Squeezes:

- These can be performed in or out of the sling.
- You can use any soft ball (tennis, racquetball, etc). Some slings come with their own.
- Squeeze the ball as many times as possible throughout the day.