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Initial Postoperative Shoulder Care and Exercise:

****Can be done if a biceps tenodesis has been performed. If a biceps tenodesis procedure has been performed, active elbow motion is delayed up to 6 weeks. Please clarify with Dr. Witty if you have any questions.**

Active elbow motion is when your own muscles move the elbow back and forth.

- 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 as comfort allows.

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.

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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)



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



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- 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.

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.



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

Passive Elbow Motion:

- The sling needs to be loosened for these exercises.
- Open the sling and allow the arm to fall to the side and hang freely. Hold the injured arm's wrist with the opposite arm to support and move it out of the sling.



- Gently bend (flex) the elbow as far as you can taking about 3 – 5 seconds to do so using only the uninjured / opposite arm to move the injured extremity.

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- Then slowly straighten (extend) the elbow all the way over 3 – 5 seconds using the opposite arm to support the injured arm as it moves downward.



- Place arm back into sling when completed.
- Perform 10 – 20 reps 3 times a day.

Wrist Motion:

- 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.

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- 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.