

Shoulder Injury

Minor Injury Unit



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How to Treat your Shoulder Injury

Following injury, your shoulder may be swollen, bruised and painful due to sprained muscles, tendons and ligaments. In order to help the natural healing process, follow the advice below.

During the first 3 days

- It is important to rest your arm to prevent further swelling. You may have been provided with a sling to support the arm. If so, use it.
- Frozen peas or crushed ice in a damp tea towel can be applied to the painful area. For maximum effect, apply for up to 20 minutes, every 2 hours. Cold can burn, so remove if uncomfortable.
- Once the worst of the pain begins to settle, it is important to start gently moving the injured arm. This may well be uncomfortable at first, but it is essential to avoid future stiffness. Check that you can move your elbow and wrist. Use your other arm to assist the movements of your injured shoulder. Move into discomfort, but short of pain

Repeat 2-5 times daily

Move your shoulder... forwards... out to the side.

After 3 days

You can now gradually discard your sling and progress your exercises to the following.

Exercise 1

Lean on a firm support with your injured arm. Allow your injured arm to hang loosely away from your body.

- a) Slowly swing your arm backwards and forwards alongside your body. Start with small movements and then gradually move as far as possible in each direction.
Repeat for 1 -2 minutes.
- b) Now swing across your body and out to the side as far as possible.
Repeat for 1 -2 minutes.
- c) Move the arm in a circular motion. Start with small circles increasing to larger circles.
Repeat for 1 -2 minutes.



Exercise 2

Stand facing a wall, placing your hand flat against it. Slowly slide or 'walk' your hand up the wall as far as possible. You can use a piece of blue tack to mark your daily progress. Remember to come down the wall slowly!

Repeat for 2-3 times.

Exercise 3

Reach up behind your back as possible with your injured arm. Compare with your other arm.

Repeat 2-3 times.

Repeat exercises 4-5 times daily and, as your arm becomes more mobile, steadily build up your level of activity.

Depending on the nature and severity of your injury, it may take between 1-3 months, sometimes longer to recover. It is advisable to continue with the exercises until full movement has returned, although in some cases some permanent loss of movement may occur.

Problems that may persist for some time include pain at night, especially if lying on the injured shoulder. Also pain/discomfort when the shoulder is put in certain positions i.e. reaching behind your back or fully over your head.

Returning to sport

Before returning to racquet or contact sport, your shoulder should be free of pain, supple and strong. Consider weight training to build up your shoulder fitness. Just be sensible and steadily build up your exercise tolerance.

If you need further advice you can telephone 111

Contact us [if not included elsewhere]

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