Physical Therapy for Your Oncologic Shoulder Replacement

This handout has information about your oncologic shoulder replacement and the exercises you will need to do after your surgery. Your therapist will put a check (√) by the information below that applies to your surgery.

Surgery Information:

1. Proximal shoulder hemiarthroplasty
   - ☐ Cemented
   - ☐ Non-cemented

2. Total shoulder replacement
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Reverse

3. Neuroplasty
   - ☐ Ulnar
   - ☐ Radial
   - ☐ Median
   - ☐ Axillary
   - ☐ Brachial

4. Lymphedema swelling
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Physical therapy goals for your oncologic shoulder replacement:

- Expected range of motion outcome
  - Proximal shoulder hemiarthroplasty (oncologic only)
    - Flexion and abduction: 30 to 40 degrees due to no active rotator cuff attachment
  - Reverse total shoulder replacement
    - Flexion and abduction: 80 to 120 degrees
- Ability to reach your hand to your face or head for daily activities.

Restrictions for your oncologic shoulder replacement:

It is important to follow these instructions to care for your oncologic shoulder replacement.

- **Do not** use electrostimulation (E-stim) at any point during your recovery.

- If you had a reverse total shoulder replacement:
  - **Do not** move your shoulder past the neutral position for at least 12 weeks after your surgery.
  - **Do not** move your arm behind your back for at least 12 weeks after your surgery.

- Lifetime weight lifting guidelines:
  - Proximal shoulder hemiarthroplasty and total shoulder replacement – **do not** lift more than 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs about 10 pounds.
  - If your surgery includes a total elbow replacement – **do not** lift more than 3 to 5 pounds. A mug of coffee weighs about 3 pounds.

- Limit the amount of weight you put on your arm and be careful when you push up from a chair.
Early Post Surgery Rehab (The First 6 Weeks After Surgery)

**Goal:** Protect your shoulder and keep your range of motion

1. **Do not** move your surgical shoulder.
2. Wear your shoulder sling at all times.
3. Support your elbow when you hold utensils to eat or write.
4. **Do not** put weight on your surgical shoulder or arm.
5. When you are in the hospital, a member of your health care team will teach you how to bathe and dress. You may be told to remove your sling. It is important to support your elbow when your sling is off.
6. While you wear your sling, move your elbow, wrist and hand to do the following exercises.

**Exercises**

**Passive Elbow Range of Motion**

1. Sit in a chair with your hands clasped. Use your non-surgical arm to bend the elbow of your surgical arm. Bring your hands to your chest.
2. Pause and hold your hands at your chest. Slowly move your arms back down to the starting position.
3. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 to 3 times each day.
Active Forearm Movement: Palm up and palm down
1. Sit in a chair and rest the lower part of your surgical arm on your thigh. Put the palm of your hand up toward the ceiling. Tuck your elbow in at your side.
2. Turn your hand over and put the palm of your hand down on your thigh.
3. Turn your hand back over to the starting position.
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 to 3 times each day.

Active Wrist Movement
1. Sit in a chair and rest your surgical arm on your thigh. Put your hand over the edge of your knee.
2. Bring your hand up toward the ceiling, so your fingers point up.
3. Bend your hand down to the floor, so your fingers point down.
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 to 3 times each day.
Active Finger Movement

1. Sit in a chair and rest the lower part of your surgical arm on your thigh.
2. Put the palm of your hand up toward the ceiling and make a fist.
3. Open your hand and straighten out all your fingers.
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 to 3 times each day.

You may also use a stress ball when you squeeze your hand into a fist.

Upper Trapezius

1. Relax your shoulders and bend your head toward one of your shoulders. Hold the stretch for 3 deep breaths and release. If needed, use your hand to put pressure on your head.
2. Bend your head toward your other shoulder. Hold the stretch for 3 deep breaths and release.
3. Repeat 3 times. Do 2 to 3 times each day.
Post Surgery Rehab (6 to 12 Weeks After Surgery)

Goal: Improve your range of motion

1. You can take off your sling during the day and when you exercise.
2. Wear your sling when you sleep to prevent lying on your surgical arm.
3. **Do not** lift anything heavier than your fork/knife or your toothbrush.
4. To help with pain, you can wrap an ice pack in a towel and use it for 20 minutes.
5. **Do not** do any aggressive stretches or manual therapy techniques.
6. Keep doing your previous exercises and add the exercises below to start gentle stretching.

Exercises

Pendulums

1. Bend at your waist and let your surgical arm dangle down toward the floor. Hold onto a table or chair for support.
2. Gently rock your body weight from your left to your right foot, or in a circular motion, to move your arm in a circle pattern.
3. Change the direction of your circle pattern and move your surgical arm in the opposite direction.
4. Repeat 5 times in each direction. Do 2 times each day.
5. Move your surgical arm forward and backward. Let your surgical arm swing freely.
6. Repeat 5 times. Do 2 times each day.

7. Move your surgical arm from side to side. Let your surgical arm swing freely.
8. Repeat 5 times. Do 2 times each day.

Isometrics

1. Stand in front of a wall and make a fist with the hand on your surgical arm. Place your fist on the wall in front of you.
2. Try to raise your fist up against the wall. You should feel the resistance from the wall on your fist.
3. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and relax.
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.
5. Stand and face the wall. Make a fist with your hand on your surgical arm. Put a pillow between the wall and your fist.

6. Push your fist in toward the wall. You should feel the resistance from the wall on your fist.

7. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and relax.

8. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.

9. Stand with your back against the wall. Put a pillow between the wall and the elbow of your surgical arm.

10. Push your elbow back into the wall. You should feel the resistance from the wall on your elbow.

11. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and relax.

12. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.
13. With your surgical arm toward the wall, put the pillow between the wall and your elbow.

14. Stand with your feet about shoulder width a part for balance. Your elbow can be bent or out straight.

15. Push your elbow towards the wall.

16. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and relax. You should feel the resistance from the wall on your elbow.

17. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.

18. With your surgical arm toward the wall, put the pillow between the wall and your elbow.

19. Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart for balance.

20. Keep your arm against your side and push your hand out towards the wall. You should feel the resistance from the wall on your hand.

21. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and relax.

22. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.
23. Put the pillow under your surgical arm. Use your elbow to squeeze the pillow into your body.
24. Hold 3 to 5 seconds and then relax.
25. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 times each day.

Passive External Rotation with a Dowel Rod
1. Sit in a chair or lie down on your back.
2. Bend your elbows to 90 degrees and keep them close to your side.
3. Hold a dowel rod or broom handle in your non-surgical arm to push your surgical arm out to the side. Keep your elbow tucked in at your side. Do not push your surgical arm out any further than 40 degrees unless told otherwise.
4. Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
5. Repeat 3 to 5 times. Do 3 to 5 times each day.
Table Slides
1. Sit in a chair next to a table. The table height should be below your shoulder level.
2. Rest your surgical arm on tabletop in comfortable position.
3. Bend forward and gently slide your surgical arm in front of you as if you were reaching for an item on the table.
4. Hold the stretch for 15 seconds and then slide your surgical arm back to starting position.
5. Repeat 3 to 5 times. Do 3 to 5 times each day.

Shoulder Raise
1. Sit in a chair or lie down on your back. Place your elbows at your side with the top of your thumbs pointed up.
2. Slowly lift your surgical arm out from your body to the level of your shoulder.
3. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and then slowly bring your surgical arm down.
4. If needed, you can use your non-surgical arm or a cane to help raise your surgical arm.
5. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.
Ceiling Punches/Circles
1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Keep your arms straight out in front of you.
3. Slowly lift your shoulders off the floor and reach your arms up toward the ceiling.
4. Your physical therapist may tell you to add arm circles after you lift your shoulders off the floor.
5. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.

Shoulder Blade Squeeze
1. Bend your arms and tuck your elbows in at your sides.
2. Pull and squeeze your shoulder blades together and then relax.
3. Keep your shoulders down at neutral position. Do not lift your shoulder ups towards your ears.
4. Your physical therapist may tell you to use a theraband to add resistance to this exercise. Loop the theraband around a doorknob. Pull the theraband away from the doorknob as you squeeze your shoulder blades together.
5. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.
Post Surgery Rehab (More than 12 Weeks After Surgery)

**Goal:** Improve your strength

- Use your theraband with your exercises to improve your strength.
- Keep doing your previous exercises and add the exercises below.

**Exercises**

**Shoulder External Rotation**

1. Sit on a stool or stand with your arms at your sides. Your surgical arm should be farthest away from the door.
2. Loop the theraband around a doorknob. The theraband should be at the level of your waist.
3. Hold the theraband in the hand of your surgical arm. Bend your elbow at 90 degrees.
4. With your elbow tucked in at your side, and pull the theraband out across your body. Keep your surgical arm parallel with the floor.
5. Slowly return your surgical arm to the start position.
6. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.
**Shoulder Internal Rotation**

1. Sit on a stool or stand with your arms at your sides. Your surgical arm should be closest to the door.
2. Loop the theraband around a doorknob. The theraband should be at the level of your waist.
3. Hold the theraband in the hand of your surgical arm that is closest to the theraband. Bend your elbow at 90 degrees.
4. With your elbow tucked in at your side, and pull the theraband inward across your body. Keep your surgical arm parallel with the floor.
5. Slowly return your surgical arm to the starting position.
6. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.

**Alternative of Shoulder External Rotation**

If it is hard to sit or stand when you use the theraband for the above exercises, you may lie on your non-surgical side. Keep your surgical arm toward the ceiling.

1. Place your surgical arm at your side with your elbow bent at 90 degrees. Rest your hand on the floor or table.
2. Keep the upper part of your surgical arm fixed at your side and raise your hand up to shoulder level.
3. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and then lower your hand back to the floor or table.
4. Repeat 10 times. Do 1 to 2 times each day.
Post Surgery Rehab (More than 4.5 Months After Surgery)

**Goal:** Use the exercises in this handout to improve your strength and keep your mobility.

**Restrictions:**

- Lifetime weight lifting guidelines:
  - Proximal shoulder hemiarthroplasty and total shoulder replacement – **do not** lift more than 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs about 10 pounds.
  - If your surgery includes a total elbow replacement – **do not** lift more than 3 to 5 pounds. A mug of coffee weighs about 3 pounds.
- Limit the amount of weight you put on your arm and be careful when you push up from a chair.