



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER SHOULDER SURGERY

1. **Sling:** You will be in a sling or other immobilizer device, depending on the type of surgery you had. **Please wear this at all times (except for exercises)** for the first 6 weeks to protect the repair and keep you comfortable. At your first post-op visit, I will discuss with you the length of time you should wear this and why it is important.

Wear Sling at all times except for ALL exercises (see below)

Wear Sling at all times and only do exercises marked below

Encouraged to come out of sling and discontinue sling use

IF THE HOSPITAL STAFF TELLS YOU DIFFERENTLY, PLEASE FOLLOW THIS FORM OR SPEAK TO DR BAILIE'S STAFF.

YOU MAY loosen sling to use your arm for EATING/WRITING/COMPUTER WORK ONLY unless instructed.

2. **Exercises:** To keep your shoulder from becoming stiff, while still protecting any repairs, you should start some gentle exercises when you are comfortable. We will show these to you before surgery. If you have any questions regarding when or how to do them, please ask. The exercises should be done 2-3 times per day and approximately 20 repetitions of each. To do the exercises you will need to come out of your sling carefully. Start your exercises the day after surgery if possible. **DO NOT DO MORE, AS TOO MUCH CAN INHIBIT HEALING**

- **Shoulder shrugs:** pull shoulders up toward ears
- **Elbow motion:** It is important to come out of your sling several times a day and let your arm hang at your side to straighten the elbow.
- **Hand/Wrist:** Use a rubber ball, silly putty, or other object to squeeze and maintain forearm strength. Also try to move your fingers, hand and wrist to avoid stiffness.
- **"Tummy Rubs":** with your elbow bent 90 degrees and your hand on your belly, slowly move your hand straight across your abdomen, back and forth.
- **"Saws":** With your elbow bent 90 degrees, hand facing forward, slowly pretend you are sawing a piece of wood. Keep your hand pointing forward at all times

- **“Pendulums” (Codman’s):** From a seated position, allow your arm to hang by your side, lean forward and allow to gently dangle at your side or in front of your legs and make small circles (6 inch diameter) clockwise and counterclockwise (20 times)
 - **Exercises may be revised by Dr. Bailie or his staff only**
3. **Ice:** Apply ice to your shoulder for 20-30 minutes every few hours and after exercises. Use a bag of crushed ice and do not let the wound become wet. If you have a cold therapy unit (OPTIONAL) you may use that instead. **WHEN USING ANY COLD THERAPY (ICE, FROZEN PEAS, GEL PACKS, MACHINE ETC) THERE IS A RISK OF COLD INJURY (FROSTBITE). DO NOT USE MORE THAN 20 MINUTES EVERY HOUR AND CHECK SKIN FREQUENTLY**
 4. **Dressing:** Leave your bandage in place to absorb the arthroscopic fluid, which can leak out. The bandage is water resistant but not water-proof. To shower, see below. If there is leakage, reinforce with gauze and tape at the edges but do not remove. If anything should happen to the dressing notify my staff. DO not ever pull or cut sutures (either clear fishing line-type or black).
 5. **Shower:** Do not get the bandage or wounds wet until I see you in the office. If you want to shower, use **GLAD PRESS n SEAL**, over lapping bandage edges by 1-2 inches. The easiest thing to do is to sponge bathe until you have seen me in the office and I have looked at the incisions. Do not soak the wounds in a bath.
 6. **Nerve Block:** If you had a nerve block, this may lead to numbness, tingling and even “paralysis” of the arm and hand for up to 24 hours after surgery. This is normal and will resolve. Some people have nerve irritation for up to 2 weeks, but this is rare and, usually not painful in any way. On rare occasions, the numbness can persist in the thumb especially for several months (very rare).
 7. **Driving:** You should be very careful if you drive prior to seeing me at the office for your first postop visit. There are some potential legal implications if you should be pulled over and have just had surgery. The law states you must be able to handle all emergency situations and this is your decision.
 8. **Therapy:** Physical therapy is extremely important after shoulder surgery. I utilize only select therapists that have the essential experience with shoulders that I feel is necessary to successfully rehabilitate your shoulder. They are located at centers throughout the valley. I apologize if it is inconvenient for you to travel to the therapist, but you will find it to be very worthwhile. Your insurance plan often dictates where you can go to physical therapy, and the number of visits. Please check your insurance coverage prior to your first postoperative visit.
 - If you have a **frozen shoulder**, you will see the therapist 1 or 2 days after surgery. **Please schedule that appointment prior to the day of surgery to make sure they can get you in on time.** We will have discussed this with you prior to scheduling your surgery.

- Otherwise, we will schedule therapy after your first visit in the office
- Our team approach with the therapists works because they know how we do surgery and I know that they understand the shoulder. They also know what we expect and we have screened them for quality over many years. That is not to say I am not open to new therapists, especially if you have had a good experience somewhere else. However, please understand that using a new PT can lead to difficulties unless we have worked with them many times previously.

9. **Follow-up:** Michelle, my surgery scheduler, typically schedules your post-op appointment when surgery is scheduled. If you do not have an appointment, you need to call as soon as possible to be seen 5-10 days after surgery. Call 480-264-6050 for your postoperative appointment or email surgery@azisks.com.

Questions/Problems: Please call during regular business hours for routine questions. If there is an emergency, call the office at 480.264.6995 or go to the nearest ER. Examples of emergencies include high fever (over 102 rectal), profuse bleeding, foul odor from the bandage or heavy drainage, worsening pain after 48 hours not relieved by pain medicine. When in doubt, contact the office. After hours, our message will provide emergency contact information.

My Medical Assistant can be reached at SAMANTHA@azisks.com or by calling her at 480-264-6968. I can be reached at dsb@azisks.com anytime.

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