

Total Shoulder Replacement Precautions



Wear your sling as directed by your healthcare provider.



Do not lift or carry anything with your operated arm that weighs more than the weight of a coffee cup.



When lying down, support your upper arm with a pillow to keep it from moving backward.

If you've had a total shoulder replacement, there are some positions your surgeon may recommend you avoid during your recovery to protect your shoulder as it heals. It is important to follow these precautions and any other instructions your health care team gives you to allow your shoulder to heal properly. 1. Make sure to wear your sling as directed by your healthcare provider. Generally, it's a good idea to keep your sling on at all times, except during self-care or when performing your home exercises.

- Always wear your sling while walking, standing, sleeping, or when you're outside or in crowds. Wearing your sling around others alerts those around you to be cautious around your operated arm. It also helps avoid someone accidentally bumping or striking your arm.
 - If you're sitting or lying down at home, you may be allowed to take off your sling. Just be careful to keep your elbow tucked in to your side whenever you're out of your sling.
2. Do not lift or carry anything with your operated arm that weighs more than one pound. This is about the weight of a coffee cup. Eating, drinking, and using a remote control are okay.
 3. Do not bear weight through your operated arm, such as when pushing up from a chair.
 - If you use a walker, it's best to use a cane or hemiwalker while your shoulder recovers. These devices can be used with your non-operative arm.
 4. Do not actively use your surgical shoulder.
 - Avoid pushing, pulling, or lifting with that arm, such as to open or close a door.
 - Avoid reaching overhead, to the side, behind your back, or across your chest.
 - Also take care to avoid fast or jerking movements.
 - You should not allow your elbow to move backwards, past your ribs. When lying down, support your upper arm with a pillow to keep it from moving backward.
 - To get out of bed, roll onto your "good side." Then use your non-operative arm to push yourself up into a sitting position.
 5. At first, you may find it more comfortable to sleep in a recliner. However, you may also sleep in a bed with a folded towel or sheet propped up behind your shoulder and upper arm for support.
 6. Do not let your forearm or hand move out to the side. Gentle use of your elbow, wrist, and hand on your operated arm is okay as long as your arm is at your side and you keep your elbow in front of you.

Your precautions may be different depending on your surgeon or rehab facility. Be sure to follow the instructions your health care team gives you.

If you have any questions about which positions and movements to avoid, contact your healthcare provider.

Putting On and Taking Off a Shoulder Sling



Your elbow should rest at a 90 degree angle in the sling.



If your sling has a waist strap, you should be able to fit 2 or 3 fingers between your body and the strap.



Keep your arm by your side as much as possible as you slide the sling off.

A shoulder sling keeps your arm and shoulder from moving too much as you heal from an injury or surgery. It is important to wear your sling properly to avoid discomfort and to make sure your arm heals the right way. To put on your shoulder sling:

- Begin holding your sling in your unaffected hand. All of the straps and buckles should be undone.
- Slide your affected arm into the sling. Your elbow should fit snugly into the corner of the sling.
- Then wrap the shoulder strap around your neck and shoulders and attach the strap end to the sling.
- Adjust the shoulder strap so your elbow is resting at a 90 degree angle, and position the shoulder pad behind your neck.

- If your sling has a closure strap, attach it across the open top to keep your arm secure in the sling.
- Next, attach the thumb strap between your thumb and forefingers.
- Some slings include a pillow or a waist strap. If your sling has a waist strap, wrap the strap around your back and fasten it near your hand so it fits comfortably and is not too tight. You should be able to fit two or three fingers between your body and the strap.
- If your sling includes a pillow, place the pillow at your waistline and attach it to the sling.

To remove your shoulder sling:

- Release the buckle on the shoulder strap.
- Then release the closure strap across the top of the sling as well as the thumb strap near your hand.
- Gently slide the sling off your arm, being careful to keep your arm by your side as much as possible as you do so.

Make sure your sling is not too tight or too loose, and that your arm is not hanging too low. Your shoulder should not be lifted or dropped when in the sling. If you feel numbness, tingling, swelling, or a cold sensation in your hands and fingers, you may need to make an adjustment. If you have any questions about your shoulder sling, please contact your healthcare provider.