



Tips to improve your shoulder operation outcome

What you can do to optimise your potential recovery before you have your operation

Research suggests that addressing factors such as your general health, fitness, strength and any ongoing pains in other parts of your body can help to improve your recovery and overall outcome after you have had your shoulder operation. By making some small changes, or seeking treatment for ongoing issues, your post-operative recovery can be improved.

Pre-operative physiotherapy session

You will be referred by your surgeon to see a physiotherapist before your operation. The aim of this session is not to fix your shoulder, but to discuss ways you can help yourself whilst waiting for your operation to improve your overall recovery. They will also discuss with you the rehabilitation process and timelines for recovery following your operation.

General health

You can improve the potential outcome of your surgery by making some changes to improve your general health.

Smoking

By stopping smoking you help to improve your healing after the surgery. Smoking can slow the healing process and increase your risk of infection and this may lead

to a worse outcome after your surgery. Services such as OneLife Suffolk can support you with this change.

Diabetes

Better control of your blood sugar levels leading up to surgery may improve your healing and reduce your risk of infection.

Weight

By being even only slightly overweight, you have the risk of poorer wound healing after your surgery. Losing even a small amount of weight can decrease this risk. Speak to your physiotherapist who will be able to advise on services who can support you with this.

Fitness and strength in the rest of your body

If you are struggling with getting up from a chair or bed without using your arms, it might be beneficial to do some strengthening exercises for your legs and core before the operation. As you will not be able to use your arm fully for a period of time after the operation, getting your legs and core stronger beforehand will help make your ability to move around after your operation a bit easier.

Keeping active is really important for your general health and wellbeing. Trying to keep as active as you can leading up to the



operation is important. Regular walking and activity which does not flare up your shoulder pain is beneficial for keeping the rest of your body strong and healthy.

Pain in other body areas

Having pain in other parts of your body, such as your neck, can influence how you experience pain after the operation. It is important to see a healthcare professional for treatment on issues such as neck pain before your surgery to help reduce the chance of heightened pain levels post-operatively. You can discuss any pain you are having in other body parts with the physiotherapy team and they can advise you as needed.

Equipment or support needs post-operatively

If you feel you will need help with your day to day personal care needs, such as washing and dressing or making food, please make sure you discuss this before your operation so measures can be put in place to support you. In some cases, the hospital can provide equipment to make activities easier to complete whilst you are recovering. This is assessed on an individual basis to see what you will need.

Before surgery tips

Being organised prior to your surgery can help make things easier and more comfortable after your surgery.

For the first few weeks you may be in a sling or have reduced use in the arm that has been operated on. This will make a lot of things you do every day more difficult as you usually use two arms to do them. Simple things like cooking, getting dressed and washed will be much more difficult.

Before your surgery it may be a good idea to have your fridge or freezer well stocked with simple things to heat up and eat, unless you have someone else who can cook for you. A cushioned lap tray may also help, so that you don't have to lift your arm up to the table to eat.

Having toiletries with simple opening lids or that have pumps you can work with one hand will make things much easier to manage as well. It may also be a good idea to have done things such as cutting your nails so that you don't have to cut them for a while after the surgery.

It is also a good idea to have extra pillows available to make things more comfortable by supporting your arm while you are trying to sleep.

Please ask if you need this leaflet in an alternative format.

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