

Shoulder Dislocation – Later Stages



Information for Patients

This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about shoulder dislocations and what you can do to help with your recovery.

What is a shoulder dislocation?

Dislocation is a medical term to describe when joint surfaces are no longer in contact with each other. For your shoulder, it will mean that for a time the ball was not in contact with the socket. It is primarily a soft tissue injury as it is normally the ligaments and other 'soft' structures (tendons etc.) that are stretched and injured.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: Shoulder dislocations tend to be really quite sore immediately after the injury, however often the pain settles once the joint has been relocated (put back in place). As you might expect, the discomfort you get from a shoulder dislocation can be different from person to person and it is quite normal to have some lingering discomfort for some time after your injury.

Limited movement: Whilst your shoulder is sore, you can expect to find that certain movements may be difficult.

Lack of trust: Any injury can sometimes affect your confidence to use a particular body part and a dislocation is no different. Whether your dislocation was a few days ago or several months ago, it is normal to feel cautious about moving your arm, however one of the most important aspects of a good recovery is to rebuild your trust back into your shoulder. Your rehabilitation will aim to do this with you.

Will my shoulder dislocate again?

If you have dislocated your shoulder for the first time and you are under the age of 25, there is a chance that your shoulder will dislocate again in the future. If you dislocate your shoulder for the first time later in life, the chances of re-dislocating are reduced. If you have dislocated your shoulder multiple times, it is right that you have referred yourself to physiotherapy as it is likely that you will benefit from rehabilitation.

What can I do to help myself?

Start using it: Your arm is designed to be used, therefore it is important to try and get it going as soon as you can (in some cases this has to be once the hospital has said they are

happy for you to do so). It is likely to be sore, but you will not make it worse by using it, in fact it will help your arm start to get better more effectively. You may need to adjust how you use your arm or how long you do things for in the first stages, but it is something that improves over time for most people.

Trust it: After a shoulder dislocation, you might not feel confident to use your arm or may feel that it will let you down or that you might injure it again. This is extremely normal and might take a little while to improve. It is hoped that the information on this page will help you understand what is normal after a shoulder dislocation and help you to start to trust your shoulder again.

Get exercising: One of the best things for most aches and pain is normal, confident movement. Your shoulder may be sore, stiff and swollen after a dislocation and it might feel like the last thing you want to do is to move it, but movement is the best medicine. You will not injure it or upset the healing process by moving it.

Is there anything I should avoid?

Try to avoid the position below for the first 6 weeks after your injury:



Will it get better?

For most people, a shoulder dislocation will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success. If you would like to know more about shoulder dislocations or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'shoulder dislocation'

Exercises



On the wall, place your hands wide apart. Slowly lean your chest towards the wall trying to keep your body straight.

Complete until your arm/s tire for 3 sets. Aim to complete every other day.



Standing close to a wall. Place both your hands on the wall shoulder width apart. Try and keep your body straight as you slowly take your chest towards the wall. You should feel your elbows gently graze your ribs as you do this.

Complete until your arm/s tire for 3 sets. Aim to complete every other day.



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