

Patient information

Shoulder dislocations / shoulder instability

Barts Health Physiotherapy Website:

www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/physiotherapy



What has happened to my shoulder?

A shoulder dislocation occurs when the arm bone (humerus) comes out of the socket in the shoulder. This can come out all the way or some of the way and may go back in on its own or require a visit to hospital.

Why has my shoulder dislocated?

Accidents such as a sports injury or a fall, can lead to a shoulder dislocation. Sometimes a relatively simple movement such as rolling over in bed can cause a dislocation. This is more common if your joints are naturally more flexible.

There is a higher risk of dislocating your shoulder again after your first dislocation. This is because the muscles and soft tissue holding the joint in the place can become stretched. It is therefore very important you exercise to reduce the chance of this happening again.

Common symptoms

- Pain
- Difficulty moving the shoulder
- Feelings of instability (feeling like the shoulder may 'come out')
- Apprehension or anxiety about movement

What can I do to help my shoulder recover?

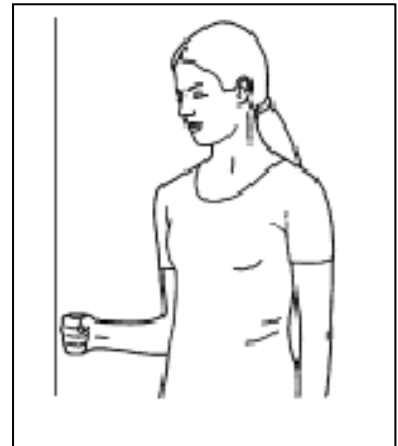
Exercise can improve the movement and strength of your shoulder after dislocation. Your Physiotherapist will be able to progress them when needed.

After a dislocation, you are advised to wear a sling for up to 2 weeks to let the injury settle. These exercises should be started after this time. They may cause some mild discomfort, but not be painful or make your shoulder feel unstable.

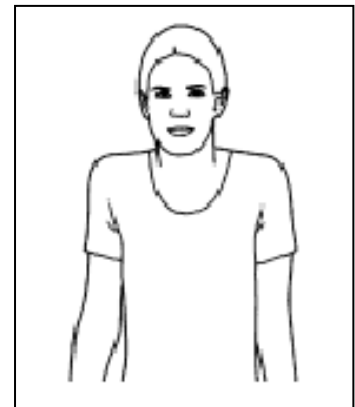
Exercises

Early stage

1. Place the back of the hand of the affected shoulder against a wall and push. You should feel the muscles in the back of your shoulder activating. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat up to 10 times.



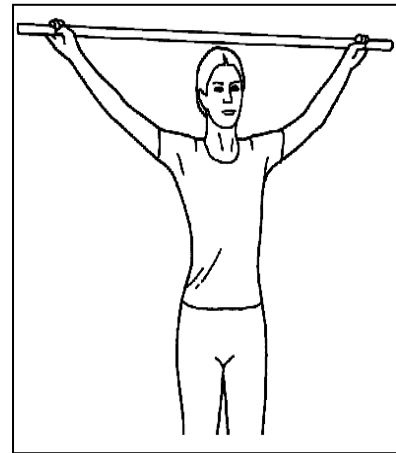
2. Gently lift your shoulder blades towards the ceiling. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat up to 10 times



3. Use your muscles to straighten your elbow, palm facing forward. You can use your other hand to assist. Hold for 25-30 seconds, repeat up to 10 times.



4. Using a stick, lift both hands up above your head as far as you can. You should feel a gentle stretch, but no pain or instability. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat up to 10 times.



Late stage

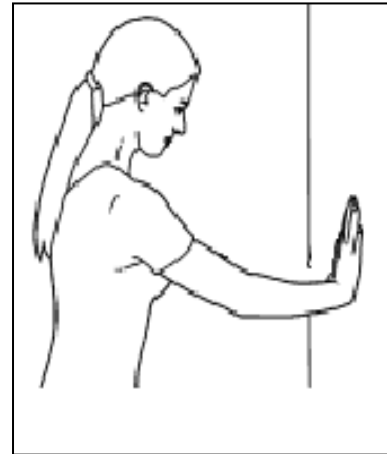
After about 4 weeks or when your movement returns to normal and pain levels are minimal, try these more difficult exercises.

1. Put your hands on the wall in front of you and gradually lean forwards, keeping the weight equally between both arms. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat up to 10 times. Progress by holding for up to 30 seconds.



You can make this harder by doing the same exercise but leaning on the edge of the table.

2. Use the same technique as the above exercise, but try to complete it with just your injured arm. Keep your trunk and other shoulder straight. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat up to 10 times. Progress by holding for up to 30 seconds.



Returning to sport / exercise

Your physiotherapist will be able to guide you on a gradual return to sport. The guidelines suggest your return to sports should be gradual and as pain allows. Generally, you could return to non-contact sport after 8 weeks and contact sport after 12 weeks, but this may change depending on your progress.

You may need to adapt your training programme to reduce the chance of your shoulder dislocating again. Your physiotherapist can help with this.

What if my symptoms do not improve?

If your pain does not improve with the exercises or your pain and symptoms increase, please consult your GP for further management.

Contact Information for Barts Health Therapies Department

The Royal London Hospital

Telephone No: 0207 377 7872

Email: BHNT.BartsHealthTherapies@nhs.net

Mile End Hospital

Telephone No: 0207 377 7872

Email: BHNT.BartsHealthTherapies@nhs.net

Whipps Cross University Hospital

Telephone: 0208 535 6671 (Wanstead site: 0208 989 2368, Chingford site: 0208 524 3071)

Email: wxphysio.outpatients@bartshealth.nhs.uk

Newham University Hospital

Telephone No: 0207 363 8141

Email: TherapyOutpatients.Newham@bartshealth.nhs.uk

For patient information leaflets on other conditions please visit:

www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/physiotherapy



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Please contact us if you need general information or advice about Trust services.

www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals

Large print and other languages

For this leaflet in large print, please speak to your clinical team.

For help interpreting this leaflet in other languages, please ring 020 8223 8934.

Te informacje mogą zostać na żądanie przedstawione w formatach alternatywnych, takich jak łatwy do czytania lub duża czcionka, i w różnych językach. Prosimy o kontakt pod numerem 02082238934.

Macluumaadkan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale, sida akhriska fudud ama daabacaadda wayn, oo waxaa lagu heli karaa luqaddo kale, marka la codsado. Fadlan la xidhiidh 02082238934.

এই তথ্য বিকল্প ফরম্যাটে, যেমন সহজে পড়া যায় অথবা বড় ব্রিট প্রিং আপনার অনুদ্রাটে বিকল্প ভাষায় পাওয়া যেতে পারে। অনুগ্রহপূর্বক যোগাযোগ করুন 02082238934।

Bu bilgiler, okuması kolay veya büyük baskılar gibi alternatif biçimlerde ve talep üzerine alternatif dillerde de sunulabilir. İrtibat için lütfen 02082238934 numaralı telefondan ulaşın.

اس معلومات کو متبادل شکل، جیسے، پڑھنے میں آسان یا بڑے حروف، میں دستیاب کرایا جا سکتا ہے، اور درخواست کرنے پر اسے متبادل زبان میں بھی دستیاب کرایا جا سکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی 02082238934 پر رابطہ کریں۔

Tell us what you think

Tweet us @NHSBartsHealth

Talk to us via www.facebook.com/bartshealth

Leave feedback on NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Reference: BH/PIN/623

Publication date: May 2017

All our patient information leaflets are reviewed every three years.