



## Duke Orthopaedics: Upper Extremity Division

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### Discharge Instructions after Arthroscopic Capsular Release

- A sling has been provided for you. The sling should be weaned as soon as your numbing block wears off.
- Use ice on the shoulder intermittently over the first 48 hours after surgery. Twenty minutes on and forty minutes off.
- Pain medication has been prescribed for you.
- Use your medication liberally as directed over the first 48 hrs, then begin to taper. You may use Extra Strength Tylenol or Tylenol only in place of the pain pills.
- You may remove your dressing after two days and leave the incisions open to air.
- You may shower 5 days after surgery. The incision CANNOT get wet prior to 5 days. Simply allow the water to wash over the site and then pat dry. Do not rub the incision. Make sure your axilla (armpit) is completely dry after showering.
- Take one aspirin 325 mg a day for 2 weeks after surgery, unless you have an aspirin sensitivity/allergy or asthma.
- If you have been ordered a CPM (constant passive motion) machine, you still need to do your stretches every hour. **THE CPM MACHINE DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF THE HOURLY STRETCHING.**
- You should perform assisted overhead reaching and external rotation (outward turning) exercises with the operative arm. You were taught these exercises prior to discharge and they are summarized on the following page. Both exercises should be done with the non-operative arm used as the "therapist arm" while the operative arm remains relaxed. Every hour while awake you are to perform a set of stretches.

If you have any problems:

- During business hours call the office: 919-681-9797
- After hours call and ask for the orthopaedic resident on call: 919-684-8111

Concerning findings:

- Excessive redness of the incisions
- Drainage for more than 4 days after surgery
- Fever of more than 101.5° F

**Please call 919-684-4502 to make a follow-up appointment. You should see the doctor 10-14 days after your surgery.**

**Your motion was full in the operating room—it is up to you to maintain it before the capsule heals back in a tightened position.**

**Overhead reach** is helping to lift your stiff arm up as high as it will go. To stretch your overhead reach, lie flat on your back, relax, and grasp the wrist of the tight shoulder with your opposite hand. Using the power in your opposite arm, bring the stiff arm up as far as it is comfortable. Start holding it for ten seconds and then work up to where you can hold it for a count of 30. Breathe slowly and deeply while the arm is moved. Repeat this stretch ten times, trying to help the arm up a little higher each time.

**External rotation** is turning the arm out to the side while your elbow stays close to your body. External rotation is best stretched while you are lying on your back. Hold a cane, yardstick, broom handle, or golf club in

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both hands. Bend both elbows to a right angle. Use steady, gentle force from your normal arm to rotate the hand of the stiff shoulder out away from your body. Continue the rotation as far as it will go comfortably, holding it there for a count of 10. Repeat this exercise ten times.