

## Shoulder Arthroscopy

A shoulder arthroscopy (or shoulder “scope”) is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that allows doctors to see inside the shoulder joint by inserting a small camera (called an arthroscope) through small incisions. Damaged or irritated tissue in the shoulder can be trimmed (called a “debridement”) using miniature surgical instruments inserted into the shoulder.

**Subacromial Decompression** surgery is performed arthroscopically and involves shaving the under surface of a bone called the acromion to widen the subacromial space in the shoulder. Subacromial decompressions are performed to help alleviate pain associated with shoulder impingement as widening the subacromial space relieves pressure on the bursa and tendons of the shoulder.

## Prior to Surgery

Share the information in this document with anyone who will be supporting you through this process. Additionally, **read the “PREPARING FOR SURGERY” document** for greater details on surgery preparation. Ask your surgical team for the “Preparing for Surgery” document if you have not received it.

**IMPORTANT:** Your surgery may be postponed if there is a change in your health status before surgery. If you begin experiencing a fever, rash, or cold, call our office immediately at (928) 773-2280.

## Day of Surgery

### The Hours Before Surgery

- Surgical and anesthesia consent forms will need to be signed.
- Pre-surgery sedatives and antibiotics will be administered to you through an IV.
- A nerve block will be performed by the anesthesiologist.
- Your shoulder will be shaved and cleaned with topical antiseptics Betadine or Hibiclens.
- You will meet with your surgeon in the pre-op area and your surgeon will answer any remaining questions you may have before surgery. Your surgeon will confirm and mark your surgical arm.
- You will be transferred to the operating room for your surgery.

## Immediately After Surgery

You will be discharged home once the medical staff determines your pain is well managed, you can walk safely to the car, and all necessary medical equipment is acquired. Plan to have someone drive you home and stay with you the first night (for at least 24 hours).

**For 24 hours after anesthesia, and while taking opioid pain medication, you are deemed to be under the influence of drugs: do NOT drive, run machinery, drink alcohol, smoke, or make final decisions during this time.**

**Pain Medication:** You may have been given an opioid/narcotic pain prescription for either Percocet (oxycodone with Tylenol) or Norco (hydrocodone with Tylenol). Take these pain pills as directed, with food, allowing 30-45 minutes for the medication to start working. You may take NSAIDs (e.g. Ibuprofen or Aleve) or Tylenol **instead** of your pain prescription if you do not have an allergy and these medications do not interfere with any medical conditions you may have. NSAIDs can be taken for pain relief along with Percocet or Norco if needed. **DO NOT** take Tylenol if you are also taking Percocet or Norco.

## The First Night after Surgery

- Take your prescribed pain medication for at least the first 24 hours after surgery.
  - Take first dose immediately upon arriving home, unless instructed otherwise.
  - Pain medications will not take away all the pain but should increase your comfort level.
  - Take pain medication with food, allowing 30-45 minutes for the medication to be effective.
- Take other prescribed medication as indicated on your prescriptions.
- Keep the surgical wound bandaging dry and intact.
- Note: the muscles in your arm may still be weak from the nerve block for approximately 24-hours following your surgery.

### Call Our Office IMMEDIATELY if ANY of the following arise after surgery:

- Chills or fever above 101°F.
- Trouble breathing, or chest pain.
- Severe nausea, vomiting, rash, and/or itching.
- Pain not relieved by oral pain medication.
- Sudden increase in arm pain and sudden increase in swelling of arm.
- Inability to urinate or empty your bladder.
- Signs or symptoms of infection including excessive redness, swelling, or wound drainage.
- Discharge from the surgical wound that has an offensive odor.
- Opening (or pulling apart) of the surgical wounds.

Flagstaff Bone & Joint:  
(928) 773-2280

**If you feel you need URGENT MEDICAL HELP, please go to the nearest emergency room.**

## Recovery

Most people can return to work that does not require use of the surgical arm within 1-2 weeks. You should expect post-surgery pain, which varies for each patient. It can take 1 to 4 months before you are pain free and back to all activities. Recovery times and amount of pain relief after surgery vary for each patient.

**Icing:** Ice the shoulder every 1-2 hours for 15-20 minutes at a time for at least the first **3-days** after surgery. Continue to ice as needed throughout the first 2-weeks after surgery. Always place a barrier between the ice pack and your skin to prevent freezing the skin. Do not put a heating pad over the incision/surgical wound. You may use a heating pad on other areas of the neck, back, or body for aches or muscle spasms.

**Swelling, Bruising, Numbness:** Swelling in the shoulder and into the arm is common following surgery and may extend into the hand and fingers. The arm may become discolored and bruised and may hurt away from the surgery site, which is normal after surgery. You may experience numbness or tingling into the hand or fingers; if this occurs, remove the sling and perform the stretching exercises on **page 4** to help relieve the symptoms. If bruising, warmth, or numbness & tingling worsen or appear severe, call the office.

### **Incisions (Surgical Wounds):**

- Keep incisions clean and dry until your 2-week follow-up visit.
  - Pat-dry incisions after showing starting 3 days after surgery.
- Wear clean clothing and use clean bedding to avoid infection.
- Look for any signs of infection, including presence of drainage, excessive redness, and large amounts of swelling or bruising.
- Do not apply any creams, lotions, or ointments to the surgical area or incisions.
- If bloody drainage is noted coming from the surgical wound after you return home, CALL US IMMEDIATELY at (928) 773-2280.

**Showering:** starting **3 days after surgery** you may remove the post-surgery bandaging, and you may shower, letting water run off the shoulder. If your incision has Steri-Strips (small white bandages directly covering the incision), please keep these on during showering until your 2-week follow-up appointment. **Do not soak or submerge** the shoulder, and do not scrub soap on it. Pat the shoulder dry after showering. Following the first bandage change at 3 days after surgery, you will then start daily bandage changes until you are seen back in the office for your 2-week follow-up appointment. Re-dress the incisions with Band-Aids for at least 2 weeks following surgery.

**No** hot tubs, bathtubs, pools, or any soaking until the incisions are completely healed (about 2-3 weeks after surgery).

## Activity & Sling

**Sling:** Your shoulder will be placed in a sling after surgery. Wear the sling for comfort, as needed. To avoid stiffness, remove the sling often throughout the day to stretch the shoulder. Start to wean out of the sling as pain allows.

**Activity:** Going on a walk (on stable ground) or riding a stationary recumbent bike are safe options to maintain fitness during recovery.

**Driving:** Do **NOT** drive until cleared by your physician. It is illegal to drive while taking opioids (narcotics). You may be released to drive once you are **no longer taking opioid pain medication and** you are cleared by your surgeon.

**Stretching Program:** It is important to complete your prescribed stretching exercises (on pages 4) **at least twice a day, immediately after surgery.** Performing these exercises and maintaining motion at the shoulder is extremely important, especially in the first two-weeks after surgery. Starting your home exercise program **prior to surgery** to learn how to perform the stretches is also beneficial to a better outcome after surgery. If you'd prefer to do formal physical therapy after surgery, discuss with your surgeon.

## Recovery & Follow-Up Appointments

**Follow-up Appointments:** Below are the typical scheduled follow-up appointments after surgery.

- 2 weeks
- 6 weeks

**IMPORTANT:** although you may feel that you are doing extremely well after surgery, it is important to still attend all routine follow-up appointments after surgery.

### **2-Week Follow-Up Visit**

During your scheduled office visit at two-weeks post-surgery, you can expect the following:

- Removal of your bandage, and assessment of your surgical incisions.
- Evaluation of your pain levels and your day-to-day function.
- Assessment of shoulder motion.
- Discussion of activity and any restrictions as necessary.

## Home Stretching Program

The following stretching exercises will help you recover from your Shoulder Surgery. **Perform these stretches immediately following surgery, at least twice a day (building up to more often as tolerated).** Strong determination and tolerance for temporary discomfort will quicken your return to normal activities. Initially you may require assistance, but you should soon be able to perform these stretching exercises on your own.

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### Pendulums



Stand next to a counter or tabletop to hold onto for balance with your non-surgical arm. Then, slowly bend forward at your waist, allowing your surgical arm to hang freely. Keep the shoulder fully relaxed during this exercise. Using your hips, create a circular motion with your body to move your relaxed shoulder in a small circle.

**Perform for 30 seconds.**

*\*Practice this exercise prior to surgery to learn how to keep your shoulder relaxed while using your hips to move your arm in a circle.*

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### Forward Table Slides



Sit in a chair, facing a table. Use your non-surgical arm to lift your surgical arm, placing it onto a small towel on the table in front of you. Slowly lean forward at your waist to slide the arm across the table. This will stretch the shoulder in the forward position. Hold the stretch for at least 5 seconds, then slowly return to the starting position.

**Repeat 10 times.**

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### Angled Table Slides



Sit in a chair, with a table at the side of your surgical shoulder. Use your non-surgical arm to lift your surgical arm, placing it onto a small towel placed on top of the table. Slowly lean forward and towards the table to slide the arm across the table in the angled direction as pictured. Hold the stretch for at least 5 seconds, then slowly return to the starting position.

**Repeat 10 times.**