

DIDACT

DIDACT: A study comparing treatments for a break to the end of the collarbone



Participant Information: Advice and Early Exercise Leaflet

You have been given this booklet as you have, or are recovering from, a collarbone (clavicle) fracture.

This booklet provides you with information to questions you may have about your recovery, as well as to guide you with some exercises which are suitable to be done soon after your injury.

If you have any questions about this leaflet, please ask staff at the hospital or contact the study team at ytu-didact@york.ac.uk

It is painful, and looks different, is that normal?

Recovering from a shoulder problem like this can be painful. It's also **normal for your collarbone to look different**.

As your shoulder can remain painful for some time after injury, make sure to take your prescribed medication regularly.

I've broken my collarbone/ I've had surgery to my collarbone, why do I need physiotherapy?

Whilst your collarbone (clavicle) is healing and your arm is resting in the sling, it is important to keep the joints and muscles moving around the injury.

Movement reduces stiffness, improves circulation, can reduce other muscle and joint pain, and may help you recover quicker.

You should remove the sling for the basic exercises and movements even in the early stages of recovery.

Movements should not be forced or painful but may be uncomfortable.

How long will my recovery take?

Again, that can depend. Avoiding smoking and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can improve your recovery.

Your local orthopaedic and physiotherapy team will be able to discuss timeframes for returning to your normal day to day activities, returning to work, and physical hobbies.

How long do I have to wear the sling for?

That depends. Everyone's recovery is different. Your time in a sling is individual to you. **You should use your own levels of comfort to guide** you as to when you can reduce your sling use. The sling provides comfort by supporting your arm; if, however you can support the arm at rest, such as on a pillow, then you may find you can remove the sling on these occasions.

Patients who do not have surgery for their clavicle fracture typically will have removed their sling by four weeks, with some patients feeling comfortable enough to do so from weeks two or three.

Patients who have had surgery and been provided a sling for comfort are encouraged to remove their sling as their discomfort reduces. Patients often remove their sling when they no longer feel it is necessary, with most coming out of their sling by two weeks.

So, what next?

These **early exercises** cover the initial stages of your recovery and **can be completed at home in less than ten minutes** so try to complete them frequently throughout the day.

They will cover moving your hand, wrist, elbow, and neck, as well as early assisted movements of your shoulder.

Your local **physiotherapist will assess you and guide you** through your own specific rehabilitation, answering any specific questions you may have.

Basic Exercises

Stiffness at the neck, elbow and hand can occur from wearing a sling for a long time. **It is also normal for your arm to feel heavy, stiff, and uncomfortable in the initial stages.**

Doing these exercises will help keep the joints and muscles moving. They can be done in sitting or standing. If you are in a sling, remove it to complete the exercises.

As you start to use your arm for longer periods you may feel an ache around the shoulder and arm. This is normal.

The exercises should help to improve your symptoms and movement.

For some of the exercises, you may need to use your unaffected arm or a support to help move the injured side. You will need less support/ no support as you improve.

You should not be lifting, pushing, pulling, or weight bearing heavily at this stage.

General Advice about exercises:

- Exercises should not be painful.
- At first, repeat **each exercise five times**.
- Aim to build up to **10-15 repetitions as you are able**.
- Repeat them again later in the day, **3-5 times a day**.
- Little and often is better.

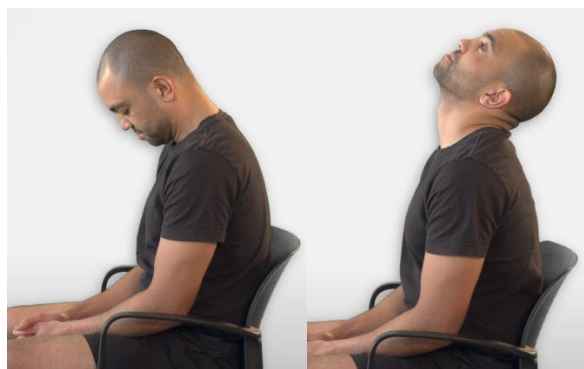
Posture Stretch

In sitting, simply sit up tall and upright, gently tuck your chin in, before relaxing back into your sitting position.



Neck Movements

Chin tilt: Move your chin down towards your chest and pause for a moment, then gently move your chin upwards taking the head backwards, then move your chin back to the starting position.



Ear to shoulder: keeping shoulders relaxed and looking forwards, take one ear towards the same shoulder and repeat to the other side.



Elbow movements

Start by bending and straightening the arm at the elbow. You may feel some tightness around the elbow as you do this, and that's normal, but don't force it and push into pain. Using your other arm to encourage this movement may be beneficial in the early stages.



Hand, wrist, and fingers exercises

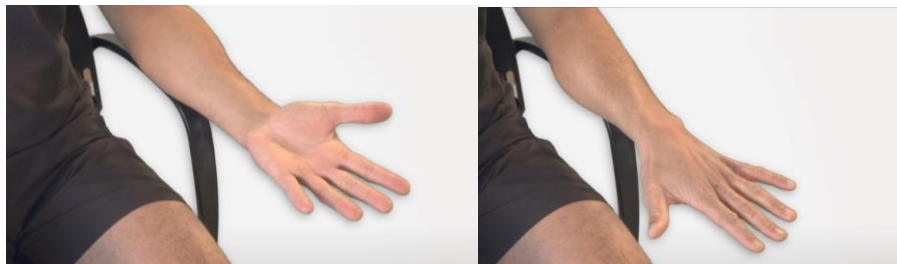
Start by opening and closing your hand and making a fist.



Next, simply move your wrist up and down (flexing and extending as shown in the picture)



Finally, turn your palm upwards and downwards.



Assisted Forward Movement

Start by using your unaffected arm to cradle and support the affected arm. Ensuring that your hand is close to the elbow, start to then slowly raise the arm up in front of you, and lower back down.



Assisted Rotation

With your affected arm bent at the elbow and tucked into your side, hold the wrist with your other hand, and use the unaffected arm to gently rotate the arm out to the side keeping the elbow tucked into your side.



Assisted outwards movement

Whilst cradling the affected arm near the elbow, move the supported arm gently out to the side, and back again.

You may need to move your supporting hand further away from the elbow as your movement improves.



Table Slides

With a table or stable surface in front of you, rest your hands on a towel, lean forwards so that your arms slide out in front of you. Then return to the starting position using your body to sit back upright and bring your arms back.



Exercise Tips

- Recovering from a shoulder problem **can be painful**.
- Early **movement and exercise may help you to recover quicker**.
- **Remove your sling frequently** throughout the day as well as for your exercises.
- **Movements may be uncomfortable** but don't force into pain.
- Aim to **start with five repetitions** of each exercise and build up to 15 as you are able.
- Repeat these exercises **little and often** throughout the day, try setting a reminder on your phone, or a poster on your fridge.
- An **ache around your shoulder and arm is quite normal** as you start to use your arm more.
- Remember to **take your prescribed pain relief**.