

Physiotherapy after shoulder surgery!

Shoulder is very mobile joint of the body, thus its muscles are very prone to get injured sometimes even in sleep or due to day to day work stress. IF medication and exercises doesn't relieve the pain, then surgical options are suggested. Commonly surgeries are done to fix muscle tear, joint capsule tear leading to recurrent dislocations.

Surgeries can be seen done in 2 ways; open repair and through a scope. Open repair needs more stitches and scope surgery needs a few.

General instruction to remember after shoulder surgery:

- First 4 to 6 weeks the shoulder is kept in shoulder sling to avoid movements causing further damage to the operated area.
- While shoulder is being restricted to move due to surgery, we can do some guided exercises for the elbow and wrist, fingers etc. This will prevent stiffness being developed in these joints.
- Elbow, wrist and finger movements are to be done at least 3 times a day to avoid swelling.
- Do not carry or lift any heavy items on the operated side until advised by the surgeon or physiotherapist.
- Do not let the hand go behind the back. This puts unwanted stress on the joint.
- While sleeping use multiple pillows to keep the hand well supported and pain-free. Avoid sleeping on the operated shoulder.

Exercise therapy after surgery

With surgeon's consent movements and exercises can be begun. Usually after 3-4 weeks. These exercises mainly focus on improving flexibility, strength and posture. As you are starting to move the joint after prolonged stage of immobility, simple movements can also be very pain-full. Icing can be used to reduce pain after the exercise session avoiding open wound and stitch area. Slowly as the strength improves, ranges get better next level exercises are introduced till full range or full functional recovery is not done. It usually takes 6 months to 1 year for complete recovery. First 6 weeks the muscles are still very weak and they may get adhered to each other as part of natural healing process. With guided exercises from a physiotherapist, one can prevent this. One can even start doing simple lightweight household duties as well as tolerated. Within 6 to 12 weeks about 45-60% strength is gained. Still one shouldn't allow any jerky movements with the affected shoulder. After 12 weeks intensive strengthening can be added.

Thus, with right and timely guidance from physiotherapist, one can recover fully after shoulder surgeries.

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