
Information for Patients' after Elbow Instability / Surgery

Patient Name: _____

Injury and / or Surgery Performed: 1. _____
2. _____

Your Next Appointment: _____

General Information

- **Elbow Brace:** The brace is designed to help prevent your elbow re-dislocating by trying to prevent your elbow from getting into the wrong position. You should wear the brace all the time, except when doing some of the exercises, or when showering. When you do have the brace off, you must keep the elbow bent at a right angle at all times. When re-applying the brace, try to make sure that the hinge of the brace is located in the right position, which is as follows: when looking at the side of the elbow held at a right-angle, the hinge of the brace should be positioned over the centre of the elbow joint- this is the true axis of the elbow joint. Most of the time the brace slips down to far- this can be prevented by keeping the upper strap of the brace snug (but not too tight) above the biceps muscle.
- **Pain medication:** Everybody has variable amounts of pain after surgery. It is normal to have pain for the first few weeks after surgery or injury. It is best to take regular pain medication like Panadol, and use something stronger (like Endone) only for "break-through" pain or just before exercises.
- **Driving:** You should not drive a car until you have re-gained close to full use of your arm. If you do drive and are involved in an accident, you may be found liable.
- **Swelling Control:** Keep you hand and elbow elevated whenever possible. This can be achieved by resting the arm on a pillow when sleeping, or by using a sling when walking around. I may ask you to discard the sling to help re-gain motion as the weeks progress. You may also be given a compressive stocking (Tubigrip) that will help to minimize the swelling.
- **Wound Care:** If you have had an operation, try to keep your elbow and wounds clean and dry. Leave the dressings intact, unless they become soaked through with blood or fluid in which case they may be changed. When showering, cover the arm with a garbage bag taped above the dressings. Do not scrub the wounds. Your stitches should be removed 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.
- **Exercises after Surgery:** Listed on the following page are a group of exercises that you are to perform over the next 6 weeks. If you are going to see a physiotherapist, then you should take this handout to the physio so that they follow my instructions. These exercises are important to minimize the amount of stiffness you will experience after your surgery / injury.

Who should I contact if I think I have a problem?

You should contact Dr Trantalís through his office during work hours or his on-call orthopaedic registrar at Concord Hospital after hours:

After Hours Concord Hospital: 9767 5000

Work Hours Miranda: 9525 2055, Concord 1300 140 905, Randwick 9399 5333

Home Elbow Range of Motion Program

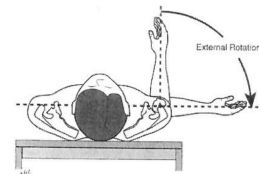
- All exercises to be done 4 times per day
- Perform each movement 10 times during each session.
- Hold each stretch for a count of 10 seconds
- Each time you perform your exercises try to increase the range of motion within the limits stated.
- Use pain as your guide. You should feel some discomfort with each stretch, however, it should not be severe pain.
- These exercises are important to prevent the development of a stiff upper limb.

A. Hand & Wrist Exercises- Begin these exercises now

Open and close your hand by making a fist then straightening out your fingers. Bend your wrist back and forth as if knocking on a door (keep arm at side).

B. Shoulder Exercises- Begin these exercises now

- **Pendular Exercises:**
 - Bend at the waist.
 - Let the broken arm hang down with the force of gravity.
 - Move the arm in gentle circles as though you were stirring a pot.
- **Assisted Forward Elevation:**
 - Raise your arm forward above your head as far as possible. You may use the other arm to help get your arm up.
- **External Rotation:**
 - With your arm at your side, bend your elbow to a right angle and then twist your arm outwards as far as possible. You may use the other arm to help with this motion by holding a broomstick in each hand and twisting the arm outwards.

**B. Elbow Exercises-** Begin these exercises NOW In ____ WEEKS

- **Elbow Flexion / Extension:**
 - Keep the brace on for this exercise
 - Range:
 - _____ degrees short of full extension
 - Flexion _____
 - Bend and straighten your elbow, keeping your palm facing down (pronation) at all times when doing this exercise. You should use the muscles of the operated arm but you can use the other arm to help.
- **Elbow Supination / Pronation:**
 - You may remove or loosen the brace for this exercise.
 - With your elbow at your side and bent at a right angle, turn the palm up and then palm down as much as you can. You can use the other hand to help.