



You have a

Proximal humerus fracture

This is a break to the top of your upper arm bone.

About your injury:

Unfortunately, your shoulder is likely to be stiff after this injury, especially when lifting the arm over your head. Your aim is to recover enough movement to do day-to-day activities. This care plan will help.

Healing:

This normally takes six to twelve weeks to heal. Smoking will slow down your healing. We would advise that you stop smoking while your fracture heals. Talk to your GP or go to www.smokefree.nhs.uk for more information.



Pain and Swelling:

Your shoulder may be swollen and you will have some pain. Taking pain medication and using ice or cold packs will help. More information is on the next page.

Wearing your sling:

Use your sling for six weeks, including in bed at night. You can take it off to wash, dress and do your exercises.

Exercise and activity:

It is important to start gentle exercises straight away to prevent stiffness. You will find pictures and instructions for your exercises below. You should not do any heavy lifting or overhead movement for the first six weeks.



Follow up:

You may see a shoulder specialist within three weeks of your injury. They may do another x-ray to check the position of your fracture. They will explain the next stage of your rehabilitation. If you have not received your appointment letter within one week, please contact us.

Any questions:

If you are concerned about your symptoms, are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan or notice pain other than at your shoulder, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.



Caring for your injury: Week 1-3

Remember to use your sling for the first six weeks, including in bed at night. Take it off to wash, dress and do your exercises. You may find it more comfortable to sleep propped up on pillows.

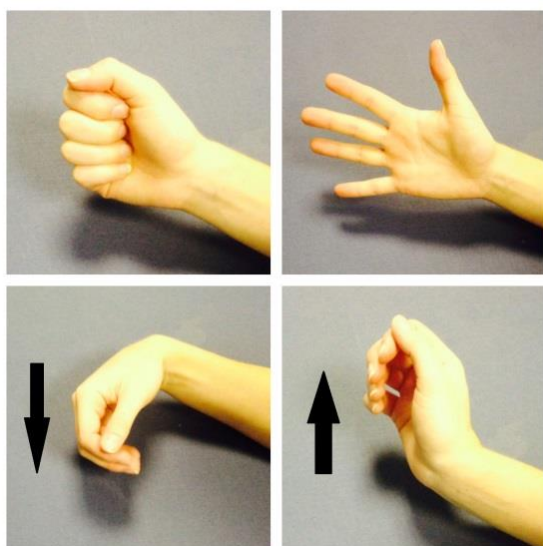
Using a cold pack will help with your pain and swelling. You can use an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel. Put this on your shoulder for 15 minutes every few hours. Make sure the ice isn't in direct contact with your skin.

Try to rest your arm, especially in the first 24-72 hours.

Exercises:

Start these exercises straight away. Hand, wrist, and elbow exercises are only needed while you are wearing a sling. You can stop these once they become easy and you have full movement. Try to do these exercises four to five times a day. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

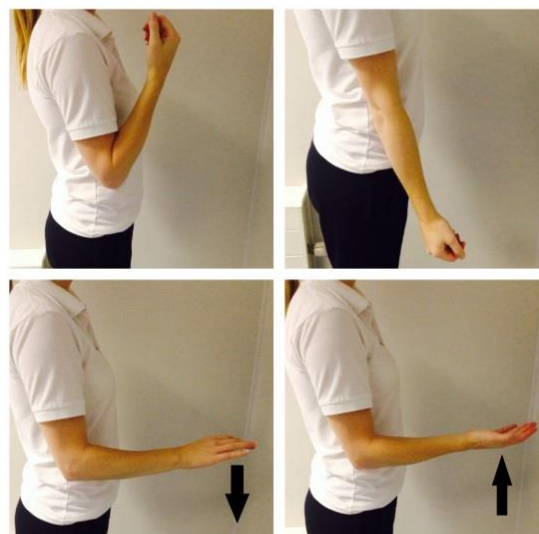
Hand, wrist and elbow exercises:



1. Open and close your hand. Next, move your wrist up and down.

Repeat 10 times

2. After a few days, hold a soft ball or rolled up socks. Squeeze the ball and hold for five seconds. Repeat five times.



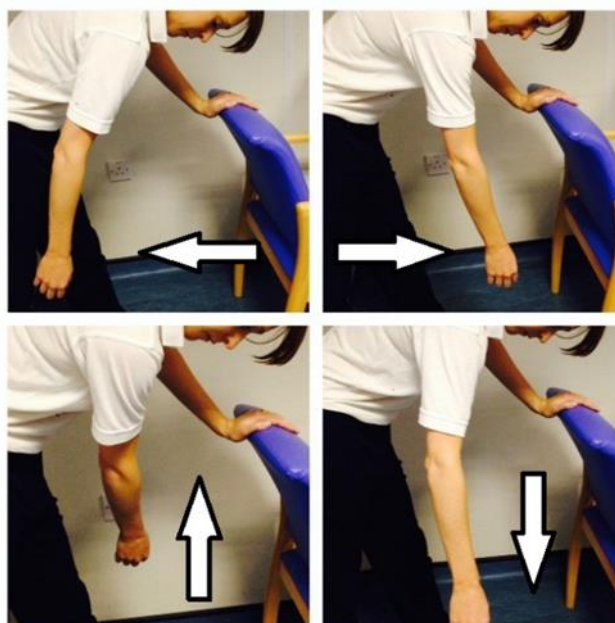
3. Bend and straighten your elbow. Repeat 10 times.

4. Bend your elbow to a right angle. Slowly turn your palm up to the ceiling and down to the ground. Repeat 10 times.



Posture Exercise:

Bring your shoulders back and gently squeeze your shoulder blades together. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat five times.

Shoulder Pendulum Exercise:

Stand next to a firm surface. Support yourself with your un-injured arm and lean forwards. Let your injured arm relax and hang down to the ground.

Gently swing your arm, making a small movement. Try to do this forward and backward, side to side and in small circles.

Aim to do this for one to two minutes in total. You do not need to push into pain. Remember to keep your arm relaxed.



Caring for your injury: Weeks 3-6

You will have an appointment with a shoulder specialist.

Remember to keep using your sling. You can take your sling off to wash, dress and do your exercises.

Exercises:

Start these exercises three weeks after your injury. Try to do them four to five times a day. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

Active Assisted Flexion

Use your other hand to lift your injured arm up in front of you, as shown in these pictures.



Active Assisted External Rotation

Keep the elbow of your injured arm tucked into your side and your elbow bent. Hold onto a stick, umbrella or something similar.

Use your good arm to push your injured hand outwards. Remember to keep your elbow tucked in.

If you don't have a stick, hold your injured arm at the wrist, guide it outwards with your good hand.



Caring for your injury: Weeks 6-12

You can stop using the sling.

You can now return to light activities. Gradually increase your day-to-day activity and be guided by any pain or discomfort you experience. Some heavier tasks may still be uncomfortable.

Exercises:

Start these exercises six weeks after your injury. Try to do these exercises four to five times a day. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

Active Flexion

Lift your arm forwards in front of you. Try to raise the arm as high as you can. You do not need to push into pain. If this is too difficult, try the same movement with a bent elbow.



Active Abduction

With your palm facing forwards, move your arm out to the side in a big arc. Try to raise the arm as high as you can. You do not need to push into pain. If this is too difficult, try the same movement with a bent elbow.



Active External Rotation

Start with your elbow bent by your side. Move your forearm out to the side, keeping your elbow bent and near your waist.



Frequently Asked Questions

I'm concerned about my symptoms and/or I am struggling to return to exercise.

Please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

I am struggling with my sling. What do I do?

Contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic. We can give advice or change your sling if needed.

When can I start driving?

You can return to driving when:

- You are no longer using a sling,
- You can move comfortably and
- You can control the vehicle safely.

Always test your ability to drive in a safe environment first.

How can I get a certificate for work?

You can get a fitness for work statement from your GP.

How do I contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic?

Call 020 7288 3310

Follow this link for a useful video: <https://vimeo.com/386705054>



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

[Twitter.com/WhitHealth](https://twitter.com/WhitHealth)
[Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth](https://facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth)

Whittington Health NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF
Phone: 020 7272 3070
www.whittington.nhs.uk

Date published: 31/05/2022
Review date: 31/05/2024
Ref: SC/T&O-VFC/ProxHumFrac/01

© Whittington Health
Please recycle

