

Broken collarbone or upper arm bone — healing in a sling

Broken collarbone or upper arm, healing in a sling



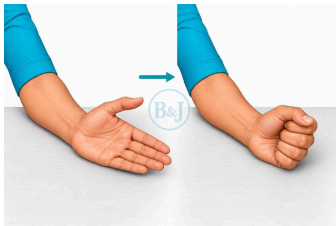
Count the weeks from the day of your injury. The date is on your prescription.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

Weeks 0–2

Rest the arm in the sling, and keep the hand, wrist and elbow moving from the first day. Start the pendulum swing when we tell you, usually within the first 2 weeks. If lying flat hurts, sleep propped up on pillows. A lump over a broken collarbone is the bone healing, and is normal.

Arm use Sling on most of the day, and at night if it is more comfortable. Take the arm out for the exercises and for washing. Light use of the hand for eating and writing. No lifting.



Composite fist

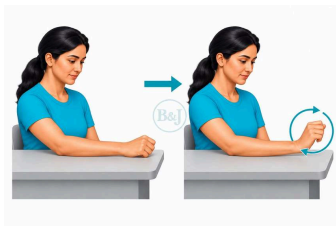
Make a full fist slowly, then open fully.

10 times

Every hour while awake

✓ Should feel
Full movement

✗ Should not feel
Catching that hurts



Wrist circles

Slow, gentle circles.

10 each way

3 times a day

✓ Should feel
Free movement

✗ Should not feel
Pain



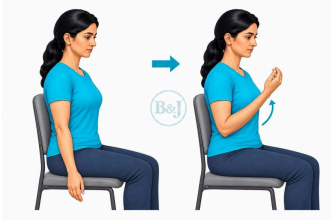
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fracture or dislocation? Please call first.



Elbow bend and straighten

Sit with the arm by your side. Bend the elbow slowly as far as it goes, bringing the hand up, then straighten it fully.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

A gentle stretch at the front or back of the elbow

✗ Should not feel

Sharp pain



Shoulder blade squeeze

Squeeze the shoulder blades together and down.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

Between the shoulder blades

✗ Should not feel

The shoulders lifting



Pendulum swing

Lean forward, let the arm hang. Swing it gently in circles using your body, not the shoulder.

1 minute

4 times a day

✓ Should feel

The shoulder loosening

✗ Should not feel

Sharp pain

Not yet Lifting the elbow above shoulder height, lifting or pushing anything, lying on the injured side, driving or riding a two-wheeler, or letting anyone, including a bone setter, massage or pull the shoulder.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 2–6

Most people come out of the sling in these weeks: after a broken collarbone usually at about 2–3 weeks, after a broken upper arm bone often a little later. Start moving the shoulder gently, using the other arm or a table to help. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Arm use Sling off at home as comfort allows. Light tasks at waist level. Nothing heavier than a full glass of water.

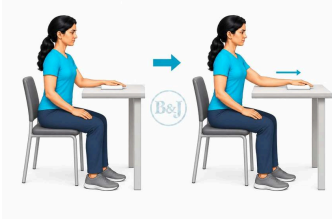


Table slide

Sit at a table, slide the hand forward, letting the body follow.

10 times

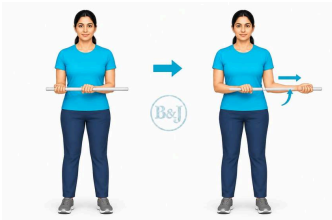
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

A stretch at the end of the range

✗ **Should not feel**

Pinching at the top



Stick-assisted external rotation

Hold a stick with both hands, elbow tucked in, and push the affected arm outwards.

10 times

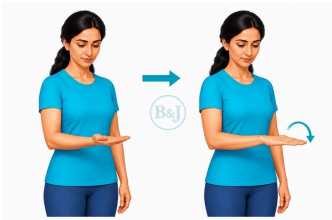
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

A stretch at the front of the shoulder

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain



Forearm rotation

Elbow tucked in, turn the palm up and down slowly.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

Free movement

✗ **Should not feel**

Clicking with pain

Not yet Lifting the arm above shoulder height on its own, lifting or carrying bags, forcing the arm behind your back, or driving or riding a two-wheeler.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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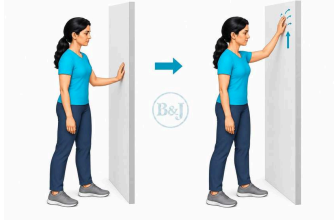
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Weeks 6–12

Sling off. Get full movement back and start strengthening, as the X-ray shows healing. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Arm use Normal light use. Lift heavier things a little at a time as the strength comes back.



Wall climb

Face a wall, walk the fingers up as high as comfortable, hold, then walk down.

5 times

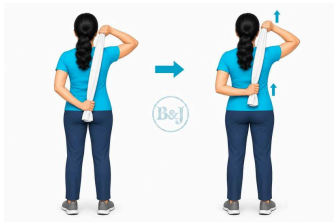
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

A stretch overhead

✗ **Should not feel**

Shrugging to cheat height



Towel internal rotation

Hold a towel behind your back and gently pull the lower hand up.

Hold 15 seconds

5 times

✓ **Should feel**

A stretch at the front

✗ **Should not feel**

Pinching



Isometric external rotation

Stand beside a wall, elbow bent and tucked in, press the back of the hand into the wall without moving.

Hold 10 seconds

10 times

✓ **Should feel**

The muscle working

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain



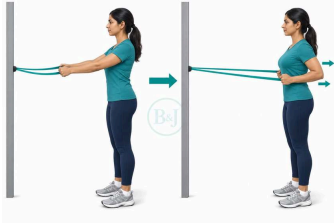
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Band row

Pull a band back, squeezing the shoulder blades together.

12 times

Once a day

✓ Should feel

The shoulder blade muscles working

✗ Should not feel

Shrugging

Not yet Heavy lifting, push-ups, or lifting weights above the head.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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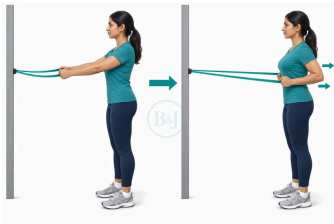
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Week 12 onwards

Back to work and sport, as the X-ray shows. Carry on with the third-stage exercises.

Arm use Full.



Band row

Pull a band back, squeezing the shoulder blades together.

12 times

Once a day

✓ Should feel

The shoulder blade muscles working

✗ Should not feel

Shrugging



Isometric external rotation

Stand beside a wall, elbow bent and tucked in, press the back of the hand into the wall without moving.

Hold 10 seconds

10 times

✓ Should feel

The muscle working

✗ Should not feel

Sharp pain



Cross-body stretch

Pull the arm across your chest with the other hand.

Hold 20 seconds

5 times

✓ Should feel

A stretch at the back of the shoulder

✗ Should not feel

Pain in the front

Not yet Contact sport or heavy overhead work until we clear you.



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Stop and telephone us if

- Sudden breathlessness or chest pain — go to the nearest hospital
- The arm or hand becomes numb, weak, cold, pale or blue — go to the nearest hospital
- A swelling at the shoulder or in the armpit that keeps getting bigger — go to the nearest hospital
- The skin over the broken bone becomes tight and white, or breaks open — come the same day
- Pain that keeps getting worse despite the painkillers
- A new snap, or the arm suddenly changes shape
- A new numb patch on the outer side of the upper arm



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