

# Shoulder Replacement – Rehabilitation Guidelines

## *Kelowna Bone and Joint Health*

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### **0 to 4 Weeks Post-op**

- Keep your shoulder loose and relaxed. Wear the sling when out of the house, and at night. When at home, feel free to loosen or remove the sling completely, but do not actively use your arm.
- Pendular exercises with relaxed shoulder muscles are often started early but not always. If any doubt, just wait for clarification at the first post-op visit.
- Range of motion for elbow/wrist/hand just to prevent stiffness of these joints
- No driving for 6 weeks

### **4 to 6 Weeks Post-op**

- Start *active* elevation (you may now *gradually* use partial muscle function in the repaired shoulder with motion exercises). Start first exercising lying down, then gradually start upright exercises at 6 weeks
- Start external rotation exercises gradually
- You may now reach behind your back
- Gradually discontinue sling and begin using arm for light waist level activities as able (no pushing, pulling or lifting). Anything with your elbow below shoulder height is 'waist level'.

### **6 to 9 Weeks Post-op**

- Use arm for all light activities as able, including gradual overhead reaching. No lifting, pushing, pulling with any force.
- Full active range of motion with no limits on motion. Stretch more aggressively on your own.
- Start Physiotherapy (*note to physiotherapist: may now instruct on adding in cross arm adduction and gentle isometric deltoid and external rotation*)
  - If you live in the Kelowna area, call KGH Physio Dept. (250-862-4210) at 5 weeks if you have not yet heard from them (they are supposed to call you).
- It is now safe to resume driving

### **Week 9 and beyond**

- Start strengthening (Therabands/elastic bands)
  - Slow and gradual progression
  - Avoid shoulder pain with strengthening exercises. If you have some discomfort with strengthening, then back off and use less resistance.
- Gradual return to activities
- Do not perform any lifting, pushing or pulling that exceeds the forces you are applying with the strengthening program (as per the physiotherapist)
- No strenuous activity until 6 months
- Keep stretching frequently on your own until 12 months to get the most motion recovery

*Written by Dr. Derek Plausinis*