



READY ORTHOPAEDICS ADELAIDE

**Dr Sunil P Reddy**

MRCS.Ed MS.Orth FRACS.Orth FAOrthA

**SHOULDER SURGERY**

REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

Patient Information Sheet

**SPECIALISING IN SHOULDER & KNEE SURGERY**

Protocol developed and validated at the Shoulder Unit, Centre Orthopedique Santy, France

- This simple self-stretching exercise protocol is an important component of your recovery and rehabilitation following shoulder surgery. It is essential to regain flexibility and maximize range of movement and function.
- Perform the exercise for 5 minutes 5 times daily; each stretch lasting 5 seconds.
- Perform the movements symmetrically and with hands clasped together, using the healthy arm to help move the operated arm. Stretching force is provided by the hands, and not the shoulder muscles which stay relaxed.
- Allow full range of movement to return gradually and progressively. The exercise should not be painful. Physical therapist, if available is for guidance only; goal is to help you regain physical independence.
- Hydrotherapy is strongly encouraged during post-operative recovery after the first two weeks. See reverse side of this information sheet regarding exercises in warm water pool.

1



### **PHASE 1: First 2 weeks after surgery.**

In the supine position, stretching is performed in 2 stages.

1. In the first stage raise your arms over the head as far as you can with elbows bent and hands clasped.
  2. In the second stage, straighten the elbows .
- Maintain stretch for 5 seconds. Remember 5 min 5 times daily.
3. For return motion, just bend the elbows without resighting gravity. Then return to starting position.

2



### **PHASE 2: 2 – 6 weeks following surgery.**

Start as soon as you are able to perform exercises sitting in a chair comfortable with the back well rested.

1. Start with hands clasped together on the lap. Raise your hands upwards together to rest on the head.
2. Straighten elbows to reach hands upwards towards ceiling. Stretch as much as possible and maintain for 5 seconds.
3. For return motion, bend elbows to return clasped hands over the head; then back to the lap.

3



### **PHASE 3: 4 -6 weeks onwards**

1. Start with hands clasped together on the lap. Raise hands upwards together with elbows bent to rest behind the back of head – Siesta position.
2. Stretch arms to straighten elbows till full elevation reached and arms are aligned with body axis.

- The self-stretching exercise program is based on the Neer protocol that focuses on regaining physical independence through simple exercises. As a matter of fact 108 muscles come into play with each stretching exercise of the shoulder girdle.
- Dr Reddy will see you at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months.
- Dr Reddy's protocol does not include specific muscle strengthening exercises, which he discourages. Self-stretching is the mainstay.

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**Please turn over  
for exercises in the  
warm water pool**



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- Rehabilitation in the warm water pool is effective in promoting muscle relaxation and improve range of movement. Buoyancy and relaxation provided by warm water is therapeutic and valuable.
- Hydrotherapy may be started on an outpatient basis as often as possible starting 2 weeks after surgery. It is recommended but not mandatory.
- Each exercise should be repeated only 10 times and limit each session to 30 minutes only.
- Physical therapist supervision during hydrotherapy is recommended.



### STANDING IN WATER

Combined elevation-retropulsion movements.



### EXTERNAL ROTATION WITH ELBOWS FLOATING

Keep shoulders relaxed and elbows not too close to the body.



### ON THE SURFACE OF WATER

Gentle and slow breast strokes.



### ELEVATION OF ARMS WHILE "FLOATING"

Holding your breath. Its just like the exercise on land, but it's a lot easier in water

- No floatation devices are used, as they increase water resistance.
- Ideal temperature is 34 deg Celsius or slightly higher.
- The warm water pool is an ideal accessory for "stretching" which remains the mainstay of treatment.

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