

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your shoulder injury. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is an acromioclavicular joint sprain?

You have a sprain (partial disruption of ligament fibres) of the joint between the shoulder blade and collar bone.

How long will this take to heal?

This injury almost always heals well with time and use. Symptoms are usually minor, but may take up to eight weeks to settle.

Will I need follow up?

Routine follow up is not necessary due to the nature of the injury.

Are there any complications?

There may be slightly reduced movement at the shoulder, especially when lifting the arm, but this is likely to improve over time with normal use.

Is there anything to avoid?

You should avoid lifting anything heavy for up to three months.



How will this be managed?

A sling (arm support) will hold your shoulder in a comfortable position for a few days. You should wean yourself off this as your pain settles and aim to remove the sling completely as soon as you feel able.

What can I do to aid recovery?

- painkillers
- gently move the shoulder (see exercises)
- gradually resume daily activities

This will help prevent stiffness and ensure quick recovery. Forcible stretching is unnecessary, and is likely to cause pain and delay your recovery

Simple exercises

2-4 weeks:



Pendulum exercise

Stand with your good hand resting on a chair. Let your other arm hang down and try to swing it gently backwards and forwards and in a circular motion. Repeat about 5 times. Try this 2–3 times a day.



Shoulder stretch

Stand and raise your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Squeeze your shoulder blades back and together and hold for 5 seconds. Pull your shoulder blades downward and hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 10 times.

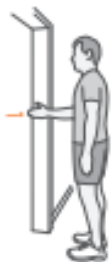
4-6 weeks:



Door lean

Stand in a doorway with both arms on the wall slightly above your head. Slowly lean forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders. Hold for 15–30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. This exercise isn't suitable if you have a shoulder impingement.

6-8 weeks:



Door press

a) Stand in a doorway with your elbow bent at a right angle and the back of your wrist against the door frame. Try to push your arm outwards against the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions on each side.



b) Use your other arm and, still with your elbow at a right angle, push your palm towards the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions on each side.

Smoking cessation

Stopping smoking will ensure optimal recovery from this injury therefore it is important to consider this advice. For more information and help, contact your GP or refer to NHS website <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>.

Contacting the team

If the pain gets worse or lasts more than six weeks or you are concerned about your shoulder, please contact the virtual fracture clinic team on **01279 973362** Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

Out of hours please contact the orthopaedic Resident Doctor on-call via switchboard on 01279 444455.

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or 01279 827211.

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net or 01279 827926 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.



**The Princess Alexandra
Hospital**
NHS Trust

Patient information

Collar bone (acromio-clavicular joint) sprain

Orthopaedic department

V2 | SCC | Orthopaedic Department | Date
noted: 08/2025 | Review date: 08/2028



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration