



Patient & Family Guide  
2020

# Exercises After Elbow Injury



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# Exercises After Elbow Injury

You are now allowed to move your elbow. Your elbow may get stiff if it is not moved after injury. You may feel discomfort during these exercises — this is normal. You may have some bruising or swelling in your arm. This will get better over time.

## **If your arm is very swollen:**

Lie down with your arm raised up on pillows so that it is higher than your heart for 30 minutes, 2 or 3 times per day.

## **Comfort measures**

- Your pain may be worse at night. Try sleeping on your non-affected side with 2 or 3 pillows in front of you. Put your affected arm on the pillows.



- When sitting, try putting 1 or 2 pillows on your lap and rest your elbow on the pillows.



## **Heat and ice**

- Use heat (like a hot pack, hot water bottle) for about 15 minutes before exercise to help loosen up your elbow.
- If you had surgery, the incision (cut) needs to be well-healed (closed) and not infected before using heat or soaking in water.
- Use ice (like a gel pack, bag of frozen vegetables) for about 15 minutes after exercise to help control pain in your elbow, as needed.

## **Exercises**

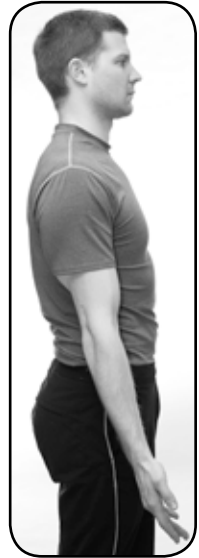
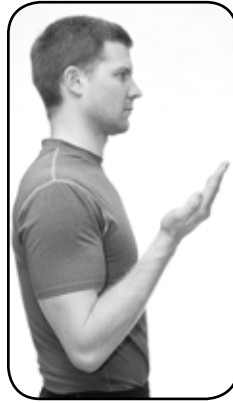
- Move your arm/elbow as far as you can without too much discomfort. The discomfort will get better over time as your elbow becomes more flexible. It is important to hold the stretches for the full time to let the muscles stretch.
- Only do the exercises you have been asked to do.
- Plan to do your exercises 3 times per day.

# Active/Active assisted exercises

## □ Exercise 1

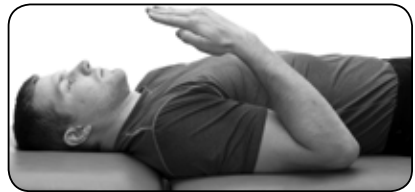
### Bending/straightening (flexion/extension)

- While sitting or standing, slowly bend your affected elbow as far as you can.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then straighten your elbow.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.



## □ Exercise 2

- Lie on your back with your affected arm at your side, palm facing up.
- Slowly bend your affected elbow. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then straighten your elbow. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.

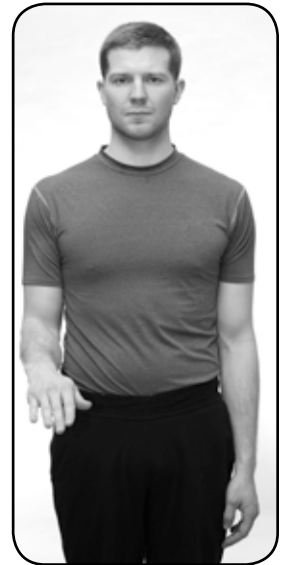
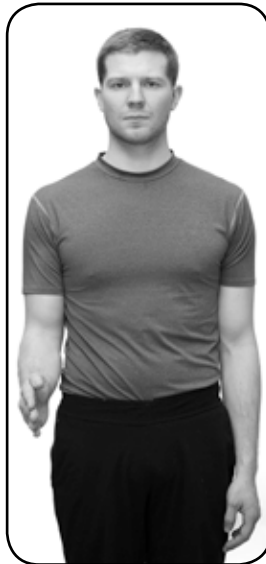
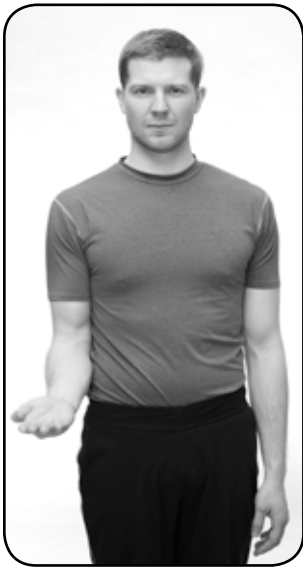


If your arm is weak, you can use your opposite hand to help with these movements.

### □ Exercise 3

#### **Palm up/palm down (supination/pronation)**

- While sitting or standing, bend your elbow, keeping it at your side.
- Turn your forearm so that your palm is facing up.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Turn your forearm so that your palm is facing down.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.



If your arm is weak, you can use your opposite hand to help with these movements.

## □ Exercise 4

### **Bending your wrist (flexion/extension)**

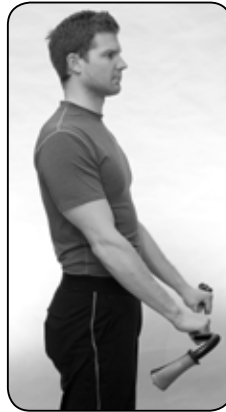
- Bend your wrist up and down over the edge of a table.
- Hold each position for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 5

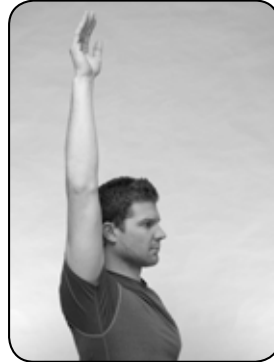
### **Raising your arm (shoulder flexion)**

- Hold a stick or cane in front of you with both hands.
- Lift both arms forward, using your non-affected arm to raise your affected arm.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Slowly lower using mostly your non-affected arm.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 6

- Raise your arm up in front of you as far as you can.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Return your arm to your side.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.



## Stretching exercises

### □ Exercise 7

#### Straightening your elbow (extension)

- Hold your affected arm with the hand of your non-affected side.
- Slowly straighten the elbow using the non-affected hand. You should feel a stretch in your elbow/front of your arm.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## Exercise 8

- Lie on your back with your affected arm off the edge of the bed, palm facing up. For comfort, you can place a rolled-up towel under your arm. Straighten your elbow. Let your affected arm hang. You should feel a stretch in the front of your arm.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



- Progression:** Do the exercise 1 time, holding for up to 5 minutes.
- Progression:** Do the exercise above with a \_\_\_\_\_ pound weight in your hand.



## □ Exercise 9

- Stand close to the corner of a wall or a door frame.
- Place the front of your shoulder and the palm of your hand on the wall or the edge of the door frame. Keep your elbow as straight as possible.
- Move so that your elbow is in front of your body.
- Slowly press your body against your elbow so that your elbow straightens.
- Straighten your elbow until you feel a mild to moderate stretch.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 10

### Bending your elbow (flexion)

- Hold your affected arm with the hand of your non-affected side.
- Slowly bend the elbow using the non-affected hand. You should feel a stretch in your elbow/back of your arm.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 11

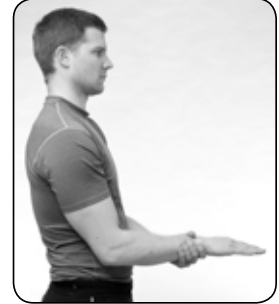
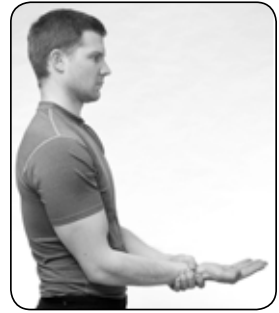
- Stand close to a wall.
- Rest the forearm of your affected arm on the wall, so that your hand is above your head.
- Place a towel under your forearm or wear long sleeves so you can slide your arm on the wall.
- Slowly slide your arm down the wall by bending your elbow. Bend your elbow until you feel a mild to moderate stretch.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.



## □ Exercise 12

### Turning your palm up and down (supination/pronation)

- Bend your elbow, keeping it at your side. Use your hand on your non-affected side to turn your forearm so that your palm is facing up.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Then turn your forearm so that your palm is facing down.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- You should feel a stretch in your forearm/wrist.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times

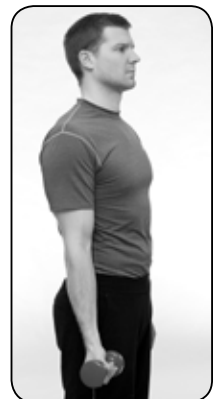
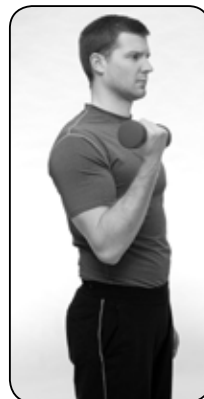


## Strengthening exercises

### □ Exercise 13

#### Bending your elbow (flexion)

- Holding a \_\_\_\_\_ pound weight, slowly bend your affected elbow.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then straighten your elbow.
- Repeat 3 to 5 times.

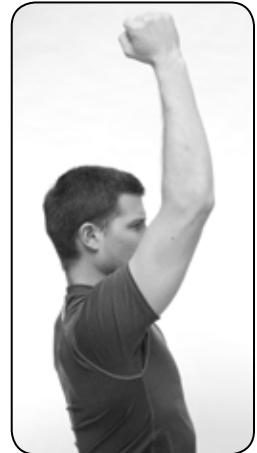
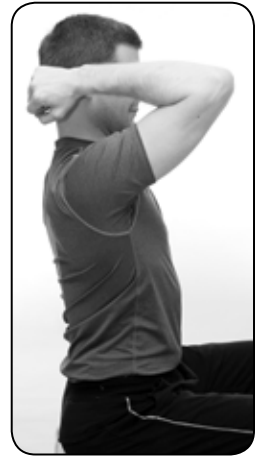


## □ Exercise 14

### Straightening your elbow (extension)

- Sit or stand with your affected arm raised overhead and your elbow bent. Hold your affected arm with the hand of your non-affected side, if needed.
- Raise your hand, straightening your elbow.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.

**Progression:** Do the exercise above with a \_\_\_\_\_ pound weight in your hand.



## □ Exercise 15

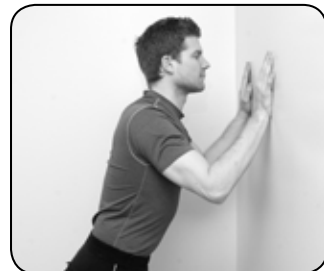
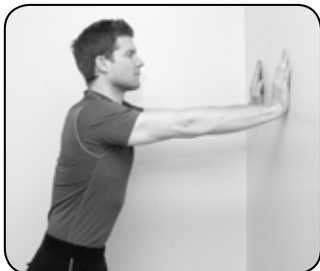
- Lie on your stomach with the forearm of your affected arm hanging over the edge of a bed.
- Straighten your elbow.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax your arm by bending your elbow.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.



**Progression:** Do the exercise above with a \_\_\_\_\_ pound weight in your hand.

## □ Exercise 16

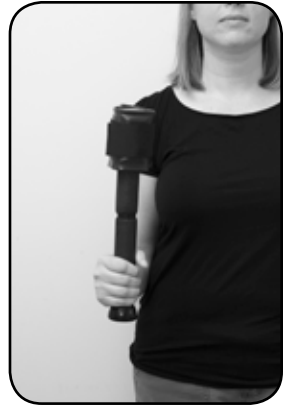
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Place your hands on a wall shoulder width apart. Lean into the wall by letting your elbows bend as much as possible. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then, slowly push away from the wall by straightening your elbows. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 10 to 30 times.



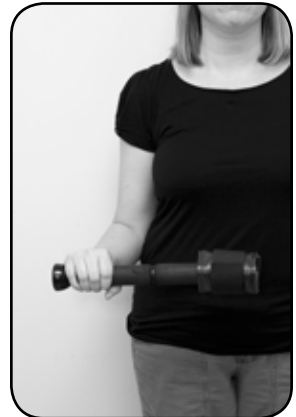
## □ Exercise 17

### Pronation/supination

- Bend your elbow and keep it at your side.
- Hold the end of a long object in your hand and start in the upright position.



- Move the object slowly like a wiper so that your palm faces down (keep elbow tucked at side).
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_.



- Move the object slowly like a wiper so that your palm faces up (keep elbow tucked at side).
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_.

