



From the office of:

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**POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**  
**PROCEDURE: ARTHROSCOPIC AC JOINT RECONSTRUCTION**

**Diet:** Begin with liquids and light foods (crackers, soup, etc.). Progress to your normal diet if you are not nauseated. You have been given a prescription for an anti-nausea medication to be taken if needed.

**Pain Medication:** You have been given a prescription for narcotic pain medicine. These types of medications can cause side effects including nausea, constipation, sedation and confusion. We recommend these only be used for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication. An over-the-counter stool softener or laxative, such as Colace, Dulcolax, or Senokot, is recommended to prevent constipation. At any time, acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be substituted instead of your narcotic medicine and used for pain control. Do not exceed 4000 mg of acetaminophen in a 24 hour period. Do not combine with alcohol. **DO NOT** use any Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID's) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, Motrin, naproxen, or Aleve for at least 6 weeks after surgery.

**Shoulder Response to Surgery:** It is normal to have pain and swelling in your shoulder after surgery. It will take several weeks for this to go away. It is also common to notice bruising around the shoulder and upper arm as the swelling resolves.

**Ice:** Keep ice on your surgical site for 30 minutes at a time, then 30 minutes off. We recommend having two ice packs. Keep the unused pack in your freezer, and rotate the packs on and off the surgical site as often as needed. Continue to use the ice as often as possible for the first 5-7 days, then as needed for pain relief.

**Wound Care:** Keep your surgical dressing dry. It may be slightly bloody or wet from the surgical site. This is normal. You may remove the surgical dressing on post-operative day #3. Keep the incisions clean and dry. Place Band-Aids or gauze dressings over the wounds and change them daily. If Steri-strips are present, do not remove them. **DO NOT** put any ointments or bacitracin on incisions.

**Sling:** Wear your sling with waist strap at all times (including when sleeping). It will be helpful to sleep propped up with pillows and with a pillow supporting your elbow.

**Showering:** Beginning post-operative day #3, you may shower if the wounds are not draining. Do not get the incisions wet for two weeks after surgery. Place Saran Wrap over the incisions to help keep them dry in the shower. You may remove the sling when showering, but keep your arm next to your side and **DO NOT** use the arm when showering.

**Exercises:** Beginning post-operative day #1, perform the following exercises.

- **Elbow flexion and extension:** Sit at a table and carefully remove your sling. Rest your elbow on the table. Then bend your elbow up and down 10 times. Put sling back on after this is complete.



- **Wrist flexion and extension:** Bend your wrist back and forth 10 times.
- **Hand flexion and extension exercises:** Open and close fingers completely 10 times.
- **Scapular Retraction:** pinch shoulder blades together and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.
- Do all of these at least 3 times a day. Replace your sling when done.

**Weight-Bearing:** You may carry items that weight less than one pound in your operated hand, as long as you are wearing your sling.

**Driving:** You will be unable to drive until you are off narcotic medications and you have been allowed to discontinue the sling. This will be approximately 6 weeks after surgery. It is important to regain adequate shoulder and arm control before operating a motor vehicle. It is important that you feel very confident in your ability to respond quickly to changing conditions before attempting to drive. Make sure you can safely get in and out of your car, as well.

**Appointment:** A follow-up appointment should be scheduled for you. If you didn't receive an appointment, or if you need to change your appointment time, please call our office at 314-523-2595.

**Problems:** If you develop severe pain, a fever greater than 101.5°, redness around the incision, thick yellow drainage from the incision, excessive bleeding, or persistent nausea and vomiting please call our office at **314-523-2595**.

Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Our staff will be available to answer questions

Weekends & Evenings

Our after-hours emergency exchange will be able to contact Dr. Blackman

For more information, please visit [andrewblackmanmd.com](http://andrewblackmanmd.com)

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