

Shoulder Fractures

Diagnosis Explanation:

A **shoulder fracture** occurs when one of the bones in the **shoulder complex (clavicle, scapula, or humerus)** breaks due to **falls, direct impact, or high-energy trauma**.

Common types include:

- **Clavicle (Collarbone) Fracture** - Common in falls or direct blows to the shoulder.
- **Proximal Humerus Fracture** - Break near the top of the upper arm bone, common in older adults.
- **Scapula (Shoulder Blade) Fracture** - Rare but serious, often caused by high-impact trauma.

Symptoms:

- **Severe pain and swelling** in the shoulder.
- **Bruising and deformity** at the fracture site.
- **Difficulty lifting the arm** or moving the shoulder.
- **Grinding or cracking sensation** with movement.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Avoid **carrying weight on the injured side**, and take **frequent seated breaks**.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **lifting, pushing, pulling, or repetitive arm movements**. Use **both hands whenever possible**.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Keep the **shoulder supported**, avoid **leaning on the affected arm**, and take **breaks every 30 minutes** to prevent stiffness.
- **Avoid:** Overhead reaching, carrying heavy objects, and prolonged arm use.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **contact sports, throwing, or impact activities** until fully healed.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **bench presses, overhead presses, deadlifts, and arm-dependent exercises**.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify movements to **avoid weight-bearing on the arms (planks, downward dog)**.
- **Avoid:** High-impact activities, sudden arm movements, and exercises that cause pain.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Calcium & Vitamin D** - 1000mg/800 IU daily for bone healing.

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily to support bone and soft tissue repair.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to promote bone strength and muscle relaxation.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to aid bone and muscle healing.
- **Eat Bone-Strengthening Foods** (leafy greens, dairy, nuts, seeds) to support fracture repair.
- **Consume Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, turmeric, green tea) to reduce swelling.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to support bone regeneration.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Shoulder Fracture)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Protecting the Joint):

- **Immobilization** - Wear a **sling** for **2-6 weeks**, as directed by your doctor.
- **Pendulum Exercises** - Lean forward, let the arm hang, gently swing in circles, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Elbow Flexion & Extension** - Bend and straighten the elbow while keeping the shoulder still, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Retractions** - Squeeze shoulder blades together, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (3-6 Weeks, Restoring Mobility & Strength):

- **Wall Walks (Forward & Lateral)** - Use fingers to "walk" the arm up the wall, **hold 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Isometric Shoulder Holds** - Press palm against a wall without moving the shoulder, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Internal & External Rotation (Resistance Band, If Tolerated)** - Rotate arm inward and outward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Improving Strength):

- **Lateral Arm Raises (Light Resistance)** - Raise arms to shoulder height, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Stability Exercises (Resistance Band Rows)** - Pull resistance band toward chest, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Modified Push-Ups (Wall or Knees)** - Maintain control, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Healthy Shoulder Handbook: 100 Exercises for Treating and Preventing Injuries* -

Karl Knopf.

2. *Overcoming Pain: A Guide to Managing Shoulder, Neck, and Back Pain* - Dr. Kit Laughlin.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.