



# Total Elbow Replacement

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## What is the elbow joint?

The elbow is a hinged joint made up of three bones: humerus, ulna and radius. The surfaces of the bones of the elbow joint are normally covered with articular cartilage, a smooth substance that protects the bones and enables them to move more easily. Occasionally the joint surface can become destroyed by wear and tear, inflammation, injury or previous surgery, making the elbow stiff and painful and unable to carry out its normal function thus requiring surgery.

## What happens during my surgery?

The aim of the operation is to replace the damaged parts of the elbow joint and with artificial compartments to enable a smoother less painful range of movement. The surgeon makes an incision (usually at the back of the elbow) and removes scar tissue/bony spurs around the elbow joint. The replacement prosthesis is then fitted in place and held with bony cement.

## What should you expect after surgery?

### Sling

Following your surgery it is normal to be fitted with a removable plaster cast to prevent you moving your elbow more than allows. You will also be provided with a sling to elevate your arm to prevent swelling. You must wear your removable cast for as long as advised by your consultant and can be removed only to do your exercises and to wash and dress.

### Pain relief

A nerve block is sometimes used during surgery which means your limb may feel numb immediately after your operation. It is normal to feel some pain as the block wears off and you will be provided with some painkillers to help with this. It is important to take these as prescribed to keep pain to a minimum.

## Ice

Ice can be helpful to reduce pain/swelling. Protect your dressings from getting wet with a plastic bag. Wrap a bag of ice/frozen peas in a damp towel and apply for 10-15 minutes. This can be repeated every 3-4 hours.

## Wound care

Your wounds will need to be kept clean and dry. The nursing staff will provide you with more information about wound care on discharge.

## Driving and work

You must not drive whilst wearing your sling/cast. Please discuss this with your Consultant or Physiotherapist. When you can return to work will depend on the job that you do. Your physiotherapist or consultant can advise you on this.

## Leisure activity and sport

The timescale for returning back to sport depends on your movement, strength and particular sport in mind. Please speak to your physiotherapist regarding this.

## Rehabilitation

Outpatient physiotherapy should be organised before you are discharged. Rehabilitation is essential if you are going to get the most out of your elbow operation.

## How quickly will I get back to normal?

Whilst your elbow is in the sling/cast you will be more or less one handed for all activities of daily living.

If you have any questions or need any advice about your exercises then please contact the Physiotherapy Department between 8am - 4pm Monday to Friday on 0121 685 4120.

## Instructions for after your surgery:

## Total Elbow Replacement

### Personal Exercise Program

#### Elbow Replacement



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Stand. Grasp the wrist of the arm you want to exercise.

Gently bend and straighten your elbow using your good arm to complete the movement. **DO NOT FORCE THIS MOVEMENT.**

Repeat   10   times.

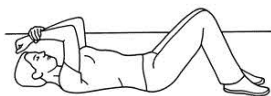


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Stand with your elbow bent and palm turned down.

Turn your palm up and down rotating your forearm using your good arm to complete the movement.

Repeat   10   times.

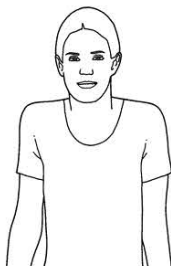


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Lie on your back with your elbows bent. Hold your operated wrist with your other hand.

Lift the upper arm assisting with your non-operated hand.

Repeat   10   times.



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Sit or stand.

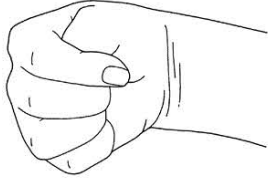
Lift your shoulders - relax.

Repeat   10   times.

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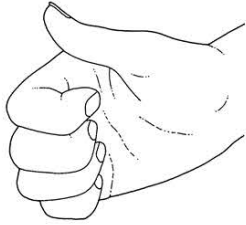


Ensure you keep your wrist moving. Bend and straighten your wrist and rotate it in circles.

Repeat 10 times.

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Make and fist and straighten your fingers as much as possible.

Repeat 10 times.

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