

How to prevent a shoulder injury

Weakness on one side of the body is common after a stroke. It is called hemiplegia. If you have hemiplegia, you will need to take precautions to protect your shoulder joint on your weak side to prevent injuries.

To prevent shoulder injuries:

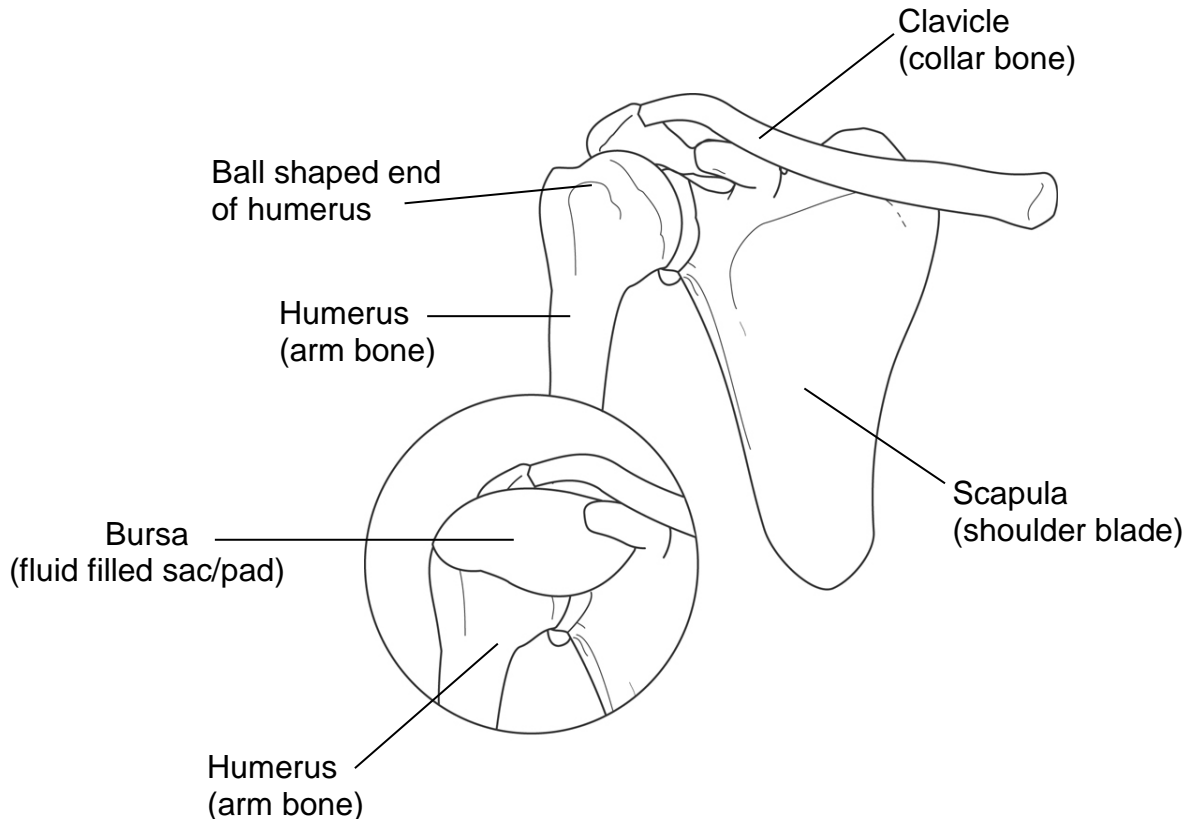
- avoid raising, pulling or twisting your arm – see page 3
- use good posture – see page 4
- wear your sling as directed by your physiotherapist or occupational therapist – see page 4

Talk to your physiotherapist or occupational therapist about exercises that you can do to strengthen your shoulder muscles.

Your shoulder

Your shoulder joint is made up of 3 bones:

- Scapula (shoulder blade)
- Clavicle (collar bone)
- Humerus (arm bone)



The humerus has a ball shaped end that is held in a shallow socket of the scapula by muscles and tendons. This is called the rotator cuff. The scapula and humerus work together to allow you to raise your arm.

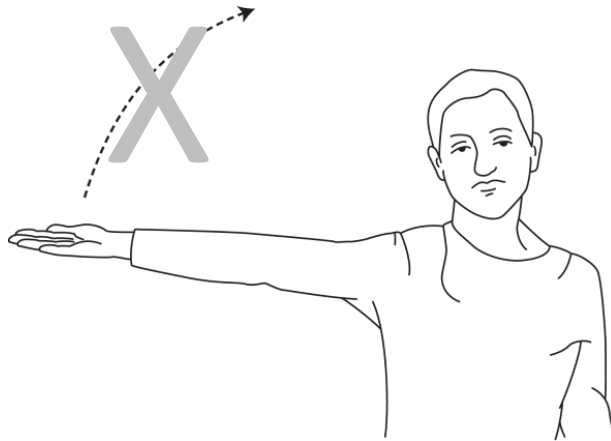
When you have a weakness on one side, the muscles of the arm and shoulder are not able to work as well. You will need to avoid some movements to help prevent injuries.

If your rotator cuff muscles get weak, the humerus in your upper arm may slip out of the socket. This is called subluxation.

Avoid these movements:

- ✘ Raising your arm above your shoulder or letting someone else lift it higher than the shoulder.

If you or someone raises your weak elbow above your shoulder, the humerus gets pushed into the socket of the scapula. This can pinch the muscle between the scapula and humerus. This is called impingement and can result in pain in the shoulder joint.



- ✘ Pulling or twisting your arm at the shoulder.

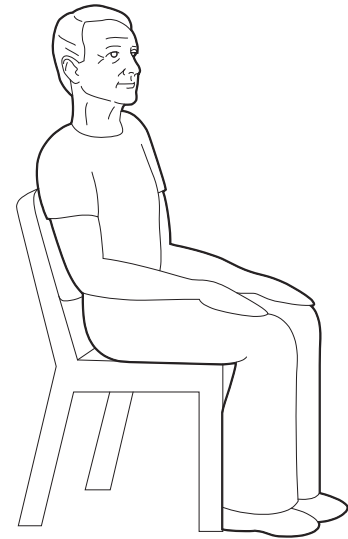
You may not have the strength to raise your arm without help from someone or moving it with your other hand.

It is important that during transfers, no one grabs under your arm and pulls on your shoulder.

Use good posture

Sit up as tall and as straight as you can.

Keep your back against the back rest of the chair, your feet on the floor and your hips and knees at 90 degrees.

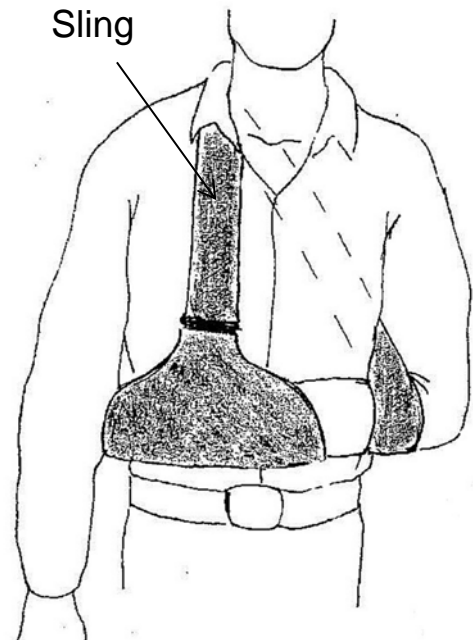


Wearing a sling

Use a sling only for transfers or walking, or as directed by your physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

Wearing a sling for too long, wearing it incorrectly or wearing it at the wrong time, may cause more pain in your shoulder.

Sling



Why should I wear a sling?

A sling is used to protect the shoulder when you are getting in and out of bed, transferring to the chair or walking.