

Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, P.C.

Clifford G. Rios, M.D

Michael Zande, MS, PA-C

Phone: 860-549-8295, Fax: 860-241-1177

www.oahct.com

Preparing for Rotator Cuff Surgery

Start living two weeks prior to the operation as though you only have one hand (the non-injured arm). Use this hand for every day use such as eating, dressing, grooming.... just about everything you do. You will not have full use of your arm that is operated on since it will be immobile for at least 4 weeks.

The following is a list of suggestions that may make your life easier after surgery. If you are living with friends or family, please discuss with them their availability to help you during the first 4-6 weeks after surgery. If you are living alone, these recommendations will be of greater importance to help you achieve independence:

1. Clothing:

- a) Shirts. You may want to cut approximately 4 short-sleeve shirts in half starting at the shirt tail seam and continuing up and through the sleeve on the side of the injured arm. This is necessary to accommodate the pillow strapped under your arm to abduct the shoulder (that is, move arm away from body). You will need the T-shirt to absorb any body sweat so that the pillow remains clean and dry. The half cut shirt looks ragged, but gives you some appearance of being dressed.
- b) Shoes: It can be difficult to tie shoelaces, so plan on wearing loafers, Velcro or loosely-tied shoes that may be slipped on or off easily.
- c) Shorts/Pants: It will be difficult to zipper, button or snap pants closed at the waist. Elastic waist shorts/pants are easier to manage with one arm.

2. Driving: You will not be able to drive while you are wearing a sling. The duration of sling use will be determined and discussed at your first postoperative visit, but typically ranges from 4 to 6 weeks. Please anticipate any errands or other responsibilities that you may take care of before your surgery.

3. Grooming: Get your hair cut, clip your nails before surgery.

4. Food: Stock up on food that is easy to prepare. Buy soft foods that are easy to cut with one hand.

5. Telephone: Phones with a speaker phone option will allow you to keep one hand free for writing, etc.

6. Sleeping: Patients with shoulder problems are often already aware of the problems they have finding a position of comfort. Many patients feel better sleeping in a semi-reclined position. If you are unable to sleep comfortably, options include propping pillows in your bed, sleeping in a reclining chair, or even renting a hospital bed in some circumstances.