

Shoulder Sling Management

It can be hard to manage your sling by yourself while following your shoulder precautions and restrictions. Have someone help you put your sling on and take your sling off. This will make it easier for you to follow your shoulder precautions and restrictions.

Your shoulder sling is typically made up of 2 major pieces:

The Sling Itself:

- This holds your forearm in place.
- It typically has 2 straps. One goes over your shoulder. The other goes around your waist.
- There might be an extra Velcro strap that extends from your sling to the 'BumpOut' (the second part of your sling).
- The purpose of your sling is to limit how much you move (range of motion) your shoulder after surgery. It supports your arm in a functional, safe position.

The BumpOut:

- This is a foam wedge that is attached to your sling with Velcro.
- The purpose of the BumpOut is to separate your arm from your body.
- Not all surgeons tell their patients to use the BumpOut. The BumpOut will be included with your sling if your surgeon wants you to use it.
- The BumpOut typically sits just above your waist to the side of your ribcage.

Follow these steps to put your sling on:

Step 1:

It is easiest to put your sling on when you are sitting.

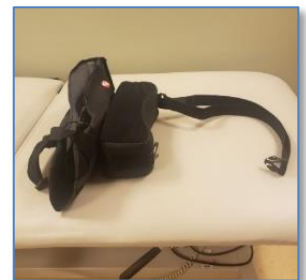
Pick a seat that has room for you and your sling.

Your sling should be on the surgical side.

Step 2:

Use your non-surgical arm.

Put your shoulder strap and waist strap in positions that you can reach when you are sitting next to your sling.

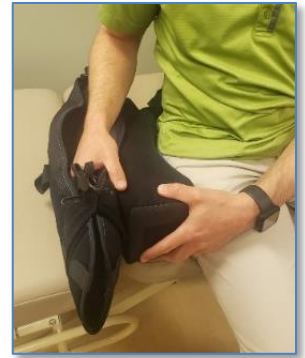


Step 3:

Use your non-surgical arm.

Reach across your body to grab your sling.

Begin to place your surgical hand through the top of the sling opening.



Step 4:

Slide your surgical arm forward through the front of the opening.



Step 5:

Use your non-surgical hand.

Grab the inside of your sling that is closest to your body.

Pull the side upward to begin cradling your surgical arm.



Step 6:

Once your surgical arm is in the sling, you may need to pull your sling forward. You want your elbow to be at the very back of your sling.

You may also need to lift your BumpOut up toward the side of your ribcage on your surgical side if it is sitting too low (by your waist).



Step 7:

Now that your arm is in the correct position in your sling, you need to buckle the straps of your sling.

Find the shoulder strap. Bring it around the back of your surgical shoulder. Then bring it around the neck on your non-surgical side.



Step 7 (continued):

Continue to bring the strap down in front of you and buckle it to the top buckle that is connected to your sling.



Find your waist strap. Bring it around your lower back to the front of your waist. Connect it to the buckle that is connected to your BumpOut.



Find your Velcro forearm strap and place it on the far side of your sling. This strap is typically connected to your BumpOut. It extends to the outside of your sling to close the forearm opening.



Step 8:

Make sure your sling fits correctly. Once the sling is fully on, it should:

- Support your elbow, forearm, and wrist with your elbow positioned at the back of the sling.
- Have your elbow bent to about 90 degrees (like the letter L in the alphabet).
- Have your BumpOut set to the side of your ribcage. It should separate your arm from your body.
- Position the cushion of your shoulder strap so it sits on your neck. This will help lighten the pressure from your strap.
- Position your surgical arm to the side so that your elbow is not behind your back. Also make sure your elbow is not so far forward that your hand goes past your belly button.



Follow these steps to take your sling off:

Step 1:

Taking your sling off is typically easier when you are sitting. You can take your sling off when you are standing, but make sure to not move your surgical arm too much.

First, unbuckle your waist strap.



Step 2:

Unbuckle your shoulder strap.



Step 3:

Un-Velcro your forearm strap on the sling side. Put the strap on your BumpOut to get it out of your way.



Step 4:

Take your shoulder strap up and around your non-surgical side and around your back to get it out of your way.



Step 5:

Use your non-surgical arm.

Reach across your waist toward the back of your sling.

Push the back of your sling down to free your elbow.



Step 6:

Use your non-surgical arm.

Once your sling is pushed down, hold either the BumpOut or sling itself.

Begin to pull your sling forward while keeping your surgical arm still.

It is important to use your non-surgical arm for this step and keep your surgical arm as still as you can.



Step 7:

Continue to pull forward on your sling or BumpOut until the sling is fully removed.

