

Joint Protection for the Shoulders

General Aims of Joint Protection

At Rest

- Support the joint in a comfortable and well aligned position

During Activity

- Find a method of performing an activity that does not cause pain
- Find a technique that does not strain the joint

Joint Protection Principles

Avoid Static Positions Avoid holding your arms in one position for prolonged periods of time, particularly in a raised position.

Avoid Repetitive Movements Avoid activities requiring abrupt back and forth movements. Use long sweeping, circular motions in activities such as washing car, washing windows, dusting.
If you must do repetitive activities, take frequent scheduled breaks.

Avoid weight bearing through the arms

Example	Aids
Getting on and off chair	Raised cushions, chair blocks
Getting in and out of tub	Bath bench/stool, bath lift, shower instead of bathing
Getting on and off the toilet	Raised toilet seat, use handicapped toilets where available

Respect Pain

Time and/or effort spent on an activity should be reduced if pain occurs and lasts for more than one hour after the activity has been discontinued. Avoid non-essential activities that aggravate pain.

Specific Activities - Energy Conservation and Joint Protection Techniques

- Dressing** Avoid tight turtle neck and pullover tops
Wear loose fitting clothing
Dress the most painful arm first, undress the most painful arm last
Select front closing shirts, dresses, and bras
- Hygiene** Use assistive aids such as: long handled comb, long handled brush
Support the arm with the sore shoulder when combing hair, shaving, applying makeup, etc.
- Work** Plan your storage and work areas so that the most frequently used items are in close proximity and at convenient heights, ideally between hips and shoulders.
Avoid having to reach. Heavy or frequently used items should not be on high or very low shelves.
If you are working on something that is high up, put yourself closer to the work.
(e.g. Use a step stool/ladder or long handled devices to extend your reach)
- Carrying Objects** Avoid carrying heavy objects if at all possible
Use trolley carts on wheels
Choose light weight equipment (e.g. avoid cast iron frying pans)
Carry objects close to the body, or use pockets and fanny packs
Slide objects along the counter as opposed to lifting
- Sleep** Try to avoid sleeping on your side - three quarter lying with a pillow behind your back may be a useful compromise if you are not comfortable on your back.
When on your side, if the shoulder you are not lying on is painful, try supporting that arm on a pillow.
A 2 " thickness of egg crate foam or memory foam on top of the mattress may help accommodate painful, bony parts at the shoulder.

Recreation

Some examples of activities to avoid are:

- racquet sports
- rowing
- swimming butterfly stroke