

A TO Z OF HINTS AND TIPS

- A** **AMAZON** – sells [just about everything....](#)
- ANTICIPATION** - if you are overly nervous, can't sleep, etc. anticipating surgery – talk to your PCP and see if anti-anxiety or other medicines could help.
- B** **BATHROOM** – look at bathroom carefully. Would a temporary grab handle help get in and out of shower/bath? Do you need an additional non-slip mat in shower?
- BEDDING** – duvets [and comforters](#) can be heavy. Would you be better with a sheet plus a light fleece blanket? [If using a recliner cot-sized mattress pads and fitted sheets are available and make it feel a lot cozier – check the dimensions before ordering.](#)
- C** **CLOTHING** – easy to put on and take off – [items that button or snap in front are great!](#) Cloak [or cape](#) for a coat if winter.
- D** **DENTIST** – have a dental check up to ensure no loose fillings or crowns – [after surgery I was told to wait 8-9 months before regular dental procedures.](#)
- DENTAL FLOSS** – [can't do it one-handed – use tiny dental brushes or floss sticks](#)
- E** **EARRINGS** – loop ear-rings (studs won't work).
- EATING** – learn to use cutlery with your 'other' hand. [...in fact try to learn to do everything with your non-affected hand.](#)
- EXERCISE** – follow instructions from physio ([Physical Therapist](#)) - don't over-do it!
- EYELASH** and eyebrow tint – [if this is something you do, then do it before surgery.](#)
- F** **FRONT-FASTENING BRA** – no explanation needed!
- G** **GETTING UP** – practice getting out of a chair and out of bed [using your “good” hand or not using any hand at all.](#)
- H** **HAIR** – consider getting hair cut short – if you can bear it... or use a hairband. [If you color your hair, do it before surgery.](#)
- I** **ICE** – Ice, Ice, Baby – before and a lot after op. ICE BAND ([or Polar Cubes](#))– can be purchased from several online retailers [or may be purchased by the surgeon.](#) Insurance may not cover it, but its invaluable! You can use frozen 4oz or 8 oz. bottles instead of ice cubes – it makes it last longer. Keep a “back-up” set in the freezer so you can constantly have a frozen ice source in the machine as needed. Also if the machine does not have an on/off switch, consider plugging it into an easily accessible, dedicated power strip that can be turned on/off when changing the frozen bottles and water.

- J** **JOGGING BOTTOMS** – elasticated waist or size bigger – [loose fitting](#).
- K** **KITCHEN** – use pre-prepared [or frozen](#) vegetables [or meals](#) from supermarket. [If food or meals can be delivered – use this option also.](#)
- L** **LEARN** – to do tasks with the opposite hand, especially if surgery is on dominant shoulder.
- M** **MEDICATION** – if you are taking regular medication, put enough into containers for [at least](#) two or three weeks to avoid having to push pills out of foil packets. [Check with your PCP and the surgeon’s office as to when/or if to stop any medications or supplements.](#) [Only](#) if there are no children in the house, consider leaving the tops of containers loose – it’s impossible to open a child-proof container with only one hand.
- MOISTERIZE** – skin on shoulder to ensure that skin is not too dry, and lower legs which will get very dry whilst wearing the surgical stockings [if required for any length of time](#). [Check with the surgeon as to applying any moisturizer on the scar after it is healed.](#) Also a travel size container that flips open is easier to hold and open than a larger one with a screw-type lid.
- N** **NIGHTWEAR** – needs to be considered as you will be wearing the sling in bed at night so I advise that you wear a nightshirt (or pyjamas [-pajamas](#)) with a collar to stop it rubbing your neck, button-up will be easier for the first week or so.
- NIGHT LIGHTS** - [light sensitive nightlights](#) avoid any dangerous stumbling in the middle of the night.
- O** **OUTDOORS** – wear sling for the first few weeks [until you are advised that it is no longer needed](#); take care travelling on buses [or public transportation](#) – [check with the surgeon’s office as to how long to wear the sling.](#)
- P** **PILLOWS** – a soft pillow vertically on operated side to rest shoulder/elbow in sling and ensure you don’t turn onto the shoulder during sleep – [a recliner might be much better.....but fair warning! – I never could get comfortable!](#)
- PRACTICE** – all tasks normally done with other hand at least four weeks before operation e.g. wiping ‘important little places’, putting on lipstick, brushing teeth and drinking cups of coffee. [Also pay attention to those tasks that require two hands – i.e. dental floss – and create ways to do it one-handed.](#)
- Q** **QUESTIONS** – don’t be afraid to ask questions, physio ([surgeon, physical therapists](#)) consultant or any other medical staff.
- R** **ROTOR CUFF** – this is very fragile, beware of sudden sharp movements.
- REACHER/GRABBER TOOL** [makes it easier to pick up items.](#)

- S** **SHIRTS** – which button up the front, are great for the first couple of weeks when you may find it difficult to get dressed.
- SHOES** – slip on shoes or boots with zips ([zippers](#)) are much easier than laces.
- SHOULDER PULLEY** – [If prescribed by your physical therapist](#) - use for exercise post op and can be purchased from Amazon.
- SHOWER** – consider a shower cape, wound dressings are waterproof but additional protection might be considered. [Use a hand towel to dry – larger bath towels are heavy.](#)
- SKIRTS** – may be easier to wear instead of trousers (toilet visits).
- STAIRS** – practice going up and down the stairs using only one arm – handrail will be on the wrong side at some point.
- T** **TRAVELLING** – in car: use a small hand towel ([or removable padded strap](#)) under seat belt if it has to go over the operated shoulder – or sit in the back of the car on the opposite side. [If on a plane or train, consider hand luggage with wheels...if anything needs to go in the overhead compartment, get help!](#)
- TOOTHPASTE** – [buy some with a flip top – much easier than having to screw top off.](#)
- U** **UNDERWEAR** almost impossible to wear without help, go bare if you dare!
- USELESS and UPSET** – is how you may feel, its expected and its temporary – [rely on and appreciate any caregivers you may have!](#)
- V** **VANITY** – no chance, you will look and feel like a ragamuffin for at least a couple of weeks.
- W** **WELL DONE** – congratulate yourself on achieving every small milestone, you will feel better.
- WIPES** – face wipes, deodorant wipes and toilet wipes – very handy.
- X** **X-RAYS** – if you are curious, ask to see your before and after x-ray's when you attend your post op out-patients' appointment.
- Y** **YOU** – will be tired, frustrated and grumpy – live with it, it won't be for long.
- Z** **ZZZ** – some people find it easier to sleep in a reclining chair in the early days' post op. If sleeping in bed as normal, more pillows may be required, especially under the operated shoulder.

*Original document created by Michelle Conway with contributions from Peta Jellis.
Latest updates in blue from Sarah Young. Thanks to both ladies for their help!*