

FAQ - Shoulder Arthroscopy

Q: When can I begin to use the arm after surgery?

A: You may begin to use your arm immediately after surgery as tolerated, unless otherwise indicated by your physician.

Q: How much/to what extent will I be able to use my arm?

A: You may use your arm as much as you are comfortable. Use common sense as a guide; listen to your shoulder, and stop any activity that irritates and increases pain.

Q: When do I start physical therapy?

A: You will begin formal physical therapy the day after surgery. This will include a bandage change, as well as an evaluation by a trained physical therapist. This will last three to six weeks depending on progress. The sessions will last approximately one hour, with a frequency of two to three times per week.

Q: How often and how long should I use ice packs?

A: In the first few weeks, you may use ice packs once every two hours for fifteen to twenty minutes at a time as needed for pain and swelling.

Q: When can I begin to drive?

A: At approximately one to three days after surgery, on average.

The criteria for driving is as follows:

1. You are no longer on narcotic pain medications
2. You are able to hold and steer the wheel in comfort, as well as "cut" the wheel without pain or weakness in unexpected situations

Q: When can I go back to work?

A: Most people will be able to return to light duty within one to two days, and progress to heavier duty in the following weeks. Your therapist and your physician will be able to help you make this decision.