

Post-operative Instructions:

1. **Pain** is significant but manageable with narcotic pain medications for the first few days. Narcotic pain medications may be necessary for up to 4 weeks for the average person. You may also take anti-inflammatory medicines (Aleve, Advil) with the narcotic medicines after surgery. Do not take the anti-inflammatory medicines within 6 hours of the Aspirin.
2. **Post-op medications:** You may be given Aspirin 325mg-take 1 tablet daily for 2 weeks to help with preventing any blood clots. Also, you will be given a prescription for promethazine (phenergan) or Zofran-take as needed for increased nausea/vomiting. Depending on the type of surgery you will be given 1 or 2 pain medications. **DO NOT GET YOUR MEDICATIONS FILLED AT ANY WALMART PHARMACY.**
3. If you are given 2 different pain medications most insurances will not cover the long acting (usually 10 pills) and you will be given the option to pay cash for this medication. If bigger surgeries with blocks this medication will help when the block starts to wear off. The 2 pain medications are independent of each other and can be taken around the same time or at different times. Again, this only applies if you specific surgery warrants 2 medications.
4. **Pain control:** Pain is usually controlled by the combined use of an ice bags, narcotic medication, and anti-inflammatory medication. As soon as you feel discomfort at home, the numbing shot (nerve block) is beginning to wear off. At that time you should take the pain medicine even if the pain is not severe. Even if your surgery is accomplished arthroscopically, you can expect significant pain the first few days after surgery. It is better to take the pain medicines as prescribed to minimize discomfort. You may also take anti-inflammatory medicines (Aleve, Advil, Ibuprofen) **but not Tylenol** because your narcotic medications already contain Tylenol.
5. **Showering:** You may remove the bulky dressing and bathe 48 hours after surgery but please leave the steristrips on and your surgical area dry. (use a plastic bag or plastic wrap or bathe in a bathtub). ****If you use waterproof bandages over incision sites while showering, please remove bandaids immediately after shower and pat dry.**
6. **Brace:** A brace may be necessary for up to 3 to 6 weeks after your surgery depending on the recommendations of your physician and the type of surgery you had. It is very important to remain in the brace at all times until further instructed by your surgeon.
7. **Icing:** Postoperatively, an ice bag can be placed on top of the dressing and is recommended to reduce swelling, decrease pain, and decrease inflammation. After the first 48 hours, it is no longer necessary to use this continuously but only as needed for pain and swelling.
8. **Driving time:** Driving may be accomplished when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications. As long as you wear your brace as instructed by your doctor and are no longer taking narcotics, you may drive if you are comfortable doing so. Most people do not drive after the surgery for at least 10 days.
9. **What about bleeding?** Do not be alarmed if you see some bloody drainage on the outside of your dressing. It is normal to have some bleeding, even after arthroscopic surgery. You may reinforce your dressing with additional gauze pads or wraps, but try not to remove the initial dressing until 48 hours after your surgery.
10. **Physical therapy:** P.T. visits will be needed twice a week for up to 4 months depending upon the individual. Therapy is extremely important to achieve the best result possible from surgery. We will schedule your therapy visits within the first 1-2 weeks after surgery.
11. **When will my arm have full range of motion?** The amount of time varies depending upon the individual and the type of surgery performed. Most people have full range of motion by twelve weeks after surgery.
12. **Swelling:** Significant swelling is normal for the first week after surgery.

13. Healing time: Recovery after any surgery takes time for the tendons to heal and time for your affected limb to strengthen. Your skin sutures are usually removed within two weeks after surgery if removable sutures are used.
14. Return to work: For a sedentary, desk type of job, one can generally expect to return to work in one week. Reduced hours may be necessary initially. For a moderately strenuous job one can expect to return around six weeks after surgery for one handed duty if available. For a strenuous job with no light duty available, return to work time can be up to four to six months after surgery.
15. Out of Work Forms: Please provide our office with any forms from work that need to be addressed. The time required to complete these forms is reduced if you answer the non-medical questions (name, address, employer information, date of injury, etc.) prior to turning them over to us. We ask that you allow our staff 7 days to complete these forms.
16. Surgical complications: Most patients hopefully will experience no complications and enjoy a rewarding return to regular activities. However, like most surgical procedures, post-operative complications can occur. These complications include infection, medical complications from anesthesia, blood clots, severe loss of motion necessitating additional surgery, re-rupture of the repair, residual pain, or nerve injury. **In the event that you have a post-operative complication, please call the on-call physician at 803-296-9200.**

We hope that your experience with the Palmetto Health Orthopedic is as pleasant as possible. Dr. Plymale is Board-certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and Fellowship-Trained in Sports Medicine and the arthroscopic treatment of knee, shoulder, elbow, and hip disorders. It is his ambition to return you to activities that you enjoy in the most minimally invasive manner possible utilizing both non-surgical and surgical methods.