



Self-Directed Home Exercise Program Pool Exercises for Shoulder Recovery

Introduction: Pool therapy for shoulder disorders was introduced to Dr. Obermeyer during his training in Lyon, France, where all patients having shoulder surgery are recommended to undergo pool therapy supervised by a rehabilitation specialist. The French observed that the relative weightlessness of the arm and the mild resistance offered by moving the arm through the water could generate profound and unique benefits to the recovering shoulder after injury or surgery. The below program was adopted from Dr. Jean-Pierre Liotard.

Instructions: Exercises should be performed in a warmed pool 3-4 times per week in approximately 30 minute sessions, with several rest periods. The water level should be approximately shoulder-height to get the maximum “weightlessness” effect. These exercises are arranged in order; you should only progress to the next set once the previous set is painless with full motion.



Swinging (Front-Back):

Swing your arms reciprocally in front of you so that one comes forward in front to the water surface while the other comes back to near or at the water surface and then alternate.



Side Swinging: Similar concept as previous but to the side. Swing one arm across the body to touch the opposite shoulder while the other arm swings behind the back to touch the opposite hip.



Supported Breast Stroke: Your body is stabilized with a band at your stomach or waist and fixed to the wall. Your feet are pushing on the wall to allow you to lean forward with your head just above water surface. In this position, make large circles while keeping the hands at water level, mimicking a “breast stroke” motion.



Thomas Obermeyer, M.D.



BARRINGTON
Orthopedic Specialists

Specializing in You



Supported Breast Stroke

(Example): Pictured Dr. Liotard instructing a group on breast stroke exercises; note the bands fixed to the side of the pool and stabilizing the waist while the patient pushes the wall with the legs. This counter balance can steady your body allowing you to achieve maximal benefit by moving the arm(s) through the water.



External Rotation: Stand in the water that is at shoulder height. With the elbows at your side, rotate the arms externally away from you and then slowly come back to the front. Try leaning your chest forward as you rotate to let the water push and stretch the arms.



Assisted

Elevation: Using your good arm, help lift the injured arm to the water surface and then overhead as tolerated.



Advanced "Siesta" Exercises: Bring the hands behind the head and link your fingers. Then bring your elbows as far forward as possible, trying to touch them together in front of your face. Then bring the elbows as far backward as possible (pictured to right).

