

# How to position your arm after a stroke

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## Information for patients and carers

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

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### Why is it important to care for my arm affected by the stroke?

The brain sends messages to the muscles in your arm when you want to move it. After a stroke the messages from your brain may be affected and you may find you cannot move your arm easily due to weakness in the muscles.

This weakness can lead to:

- poor positioning
- pain
- altered sensation (feeling).

### How can I help myself?

You should try to become more aware of where your arm is by keeping it where you can always see it. Daily massage can help you to become more aware of your arm and its position. Your therapist, physiotherapist or occupational therapist will advise you.

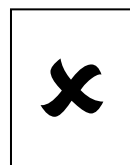
### How should I position my arm when sitting?

**Always be aware of where your arm is.**

- You should always support your arm on a pillow as shown in the picture.



- **Never** allow your arm to hang over the side of the chair as this may cause damage to your shoulder.



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## How should I position my arm when lying in bed?

**Always be aware of where your arm is.**

Position your arm as shown in the pictures below. You may need to ask someone to help you with this in the early stages of your recovery.

### Lying on your back



### Lying on your side



## How should I move my arm?

**Always be aware of where your arm is.**

**You should:**

- take hold of the underside of the elbow of your affected arm



- slide your hand along the arm towards your wrist



- support your wrist, move your arm forward and place it on a pillow



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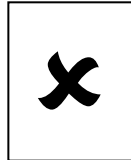
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If possible, always move your own arm. If you need someone to help move your

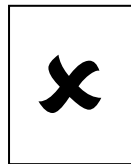
Do not let anyone move your arm any other way.

## You must never:

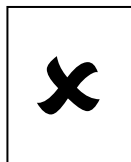
- pull your arm across your body



- lift your arm by the hand only  
always support it at the wrist



- allow anyone to lift or move  
your arm from under your  
affected shoulder



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## How can I keep my affected hand clean?

It is very important to:

- always keep your hand clean and dry. Take special care to dry the palm and in between your fingers to help prevent any sores developing.
- keep your nails short so they do not dig into your palm. You may need help with this.
- check your skin for any red, swollen or sore areas. If needed, contact your therapist for advice.
- try to keep your hand open and your fingers straight.

## Contact numbers

If you need further advice, or have any problems, please contact your therapist.

## University Hospital of North Tees

### Stroke Unit, Ward 41

telephone: 01642 382741

## Community Stroke Teams

### North Tees and Hartlepool locality

#### Single Point of Access

University of Hartlepool

telephone: 01429 522500

Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 5.00pm

### Easington locality

telephone: 0191 5692819

Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 5.00pm

If you have any worries or concerns you should contact your GP during normal surgery hours. Outside surgery hours, you should contact your GP's surgery for the Out of Hours Service number.

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**Further information is available from:**

**Stroke Information Service**

Stroke Association  
Life after Stroke Centre  
Church Lane  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B61 8RA  
Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100  
Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm  
website at [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)  
Email: [info@stroke.org.uk](mailto:info@stroke.org.uk)  
From a textphone: 18001 0303 3033 100

**NHS Choices**

telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)  
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones  
or via the website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: [patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk)

## Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883

Email: [patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk)

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based at the University Hospital of North Tees. It is near the lifts in the main tower block.

## Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: [information.governance@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:information.governance@nth.nhs.uk)

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE  
University Hospital of Hartlepool, Holdforth Road, Hartlepool. TS24 9AH

Telephone: 01642 617617

Fax: 01642 624089