

Modifications for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

After your surgery, you may need to rely on your unaffected arm to perform your daily activities. Here are some tips on how you could modify your home environment and modify the way you perform your daily activities to help you cope better.

Instructions:

1. From the list below, click on the activity(s) modification you would like to find out more about.
2. Click on the "[Back to top](#)" button at the bottom right-hand corner of the page to return to this list for your next exercise.

1. Modifying the environment to improve performance in daily activities

- A. General tips
- B. Kitchen modifications
- C. Mealtime modifications
- D. Bathroom modifications
- E. Bedroom modifications

2. Modified method of getting out of bed

- A. Getting out of bed

3. Dressing Advice

- A. Wearing a shirt
- B. Removing a shirt

4. Modified method of wearing a bra

- A. Wearing a bra
- B. Removing a bra

5. Modified method for showering

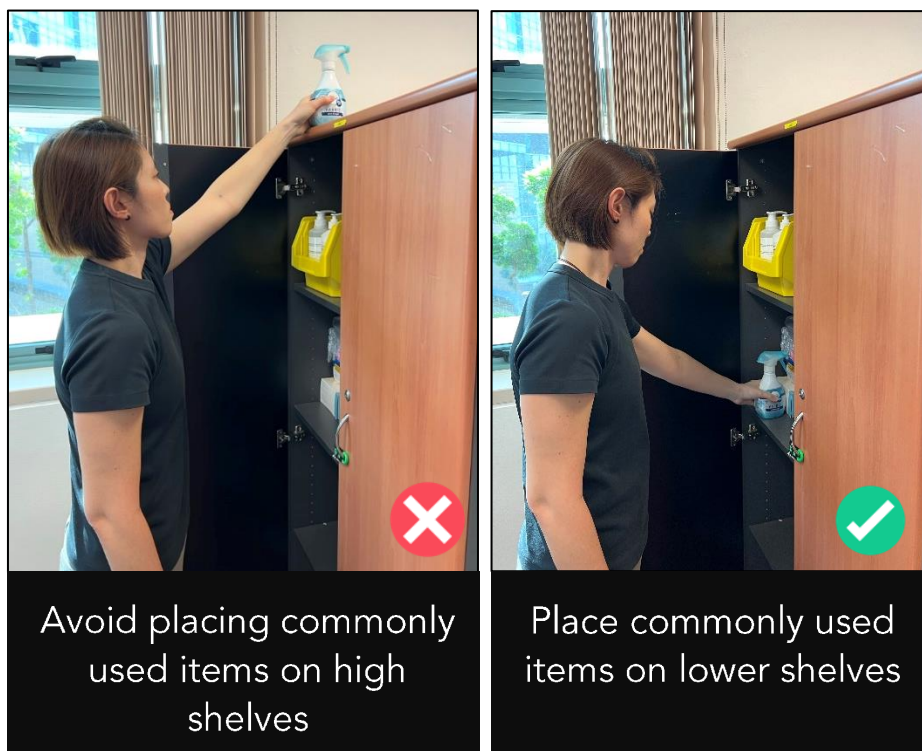
- A. Tips for showering

1. Modifying the Environment to Improve Performance in Daily Activities

Performing your daily activities mainly with your unaffected arm may increase the risk of developing overuse or strain injuries. Here are some ways to modify the way you perform your daily activities by using assistive equipment or making changes to your environment.

1A. General tips

- You are not encouraged to carry heavy items in one hand. However, you can consider sliding items across the surface (e.g., a table) to avoid carrying them.
- Items that you use every day should be placed at shoulder-height or lower.



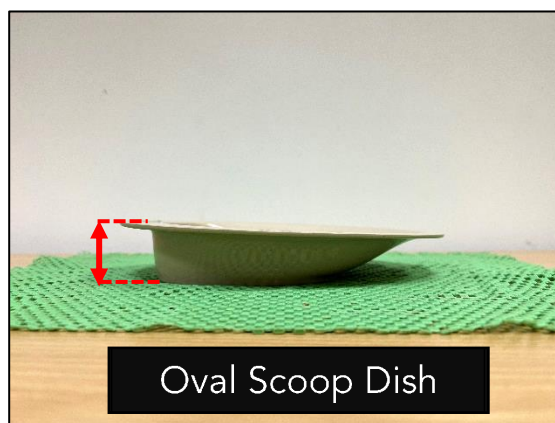
[\[Back to top\]](#)

1B. Kitchen modifications

- Keep commonly used food items in containers that are easy to open with one hand.
- Reduce the weight of your kettle / pot when boiling water by not filling it completely.
- Hang clothes on a clothes rack or clothesline at shoulder-level or lower. Avoid hanging clothes on bamboo poles, especially those outside the window.

1C. Mealtime modifications

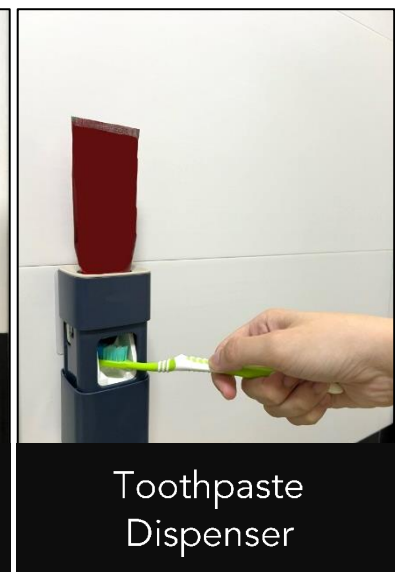
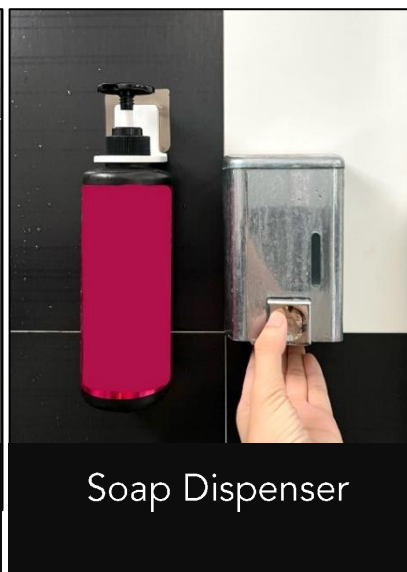
- Use deep plates or bowls to keep food from falling off the plate easily.
- Use a non-slip mat under your plate or bowl to prevent it from sliding on the table.



[\[Back to top\]](#)

1D. Bathroom modifications

- Place a stool or shower chair against a wall in the bathroom so you can have seated showers.
- Use a handheld shower head.
- Ensure that your shampoo and soap are in pump bottles or soap dispensers.
- Use a toothpaste dispenser.
- If reaching for your toilet paper roll is difficult, use tissues instead and place a tissue box / packet on your unaffected side next to the toilet bowl.



[\[Back to top\]](#)

1E. Bedroom modifications

- Place extra pillows on your bed to prop yourself up or support your arm if needed.
- Position your bed such that you can easily access the side you need to sleep on (i.e., same side as your affected arm).
- A sturdy side table beside your bed can be used as a hard surface to push up on when getting out of bed. Make sure it does not slide when pushed on.
- Consider installing a portable bedrail. This can be used when getting up from bed.

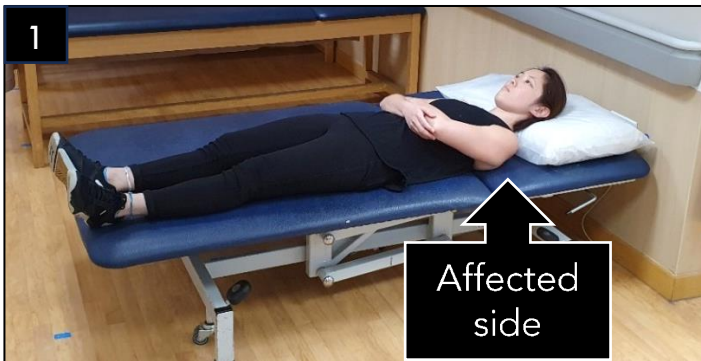


[\[Back to top\]](#)

2. Modified Method of Getting Out of Bed

Please do not move your affected arm unless you have been instructed to by your doctor or therapist!

Here is a modified method of getting out of bed without using your affected arm.

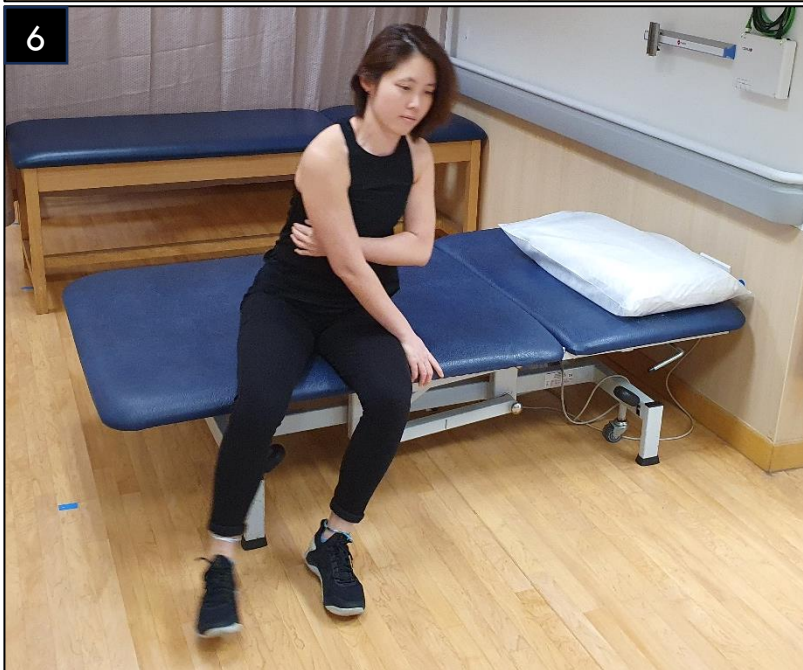


1. Ensure that there is sufficient space for you to roll onto your side safely.
2. Roll onto your affected side, ensuring that your weight is mostly on the flat part of your shoulder blade and not directly on your shoulder.
3. Bring both legs off the bed.
4. Using your unaffected hand, push off on the surface of the bed (or on the surface of a chair / drawer / side table next to your bed) to sit up.

[\[Back to top\]](#)



5. Continue pushing yourself up till you are seated near the edge of your bed.



[\[Back to top\]](#)

3. Dressing Advice

Please do not move your affected arm unless you have been instructed to by your doctor or therapist. Here are some tips to make dressing easier for you:

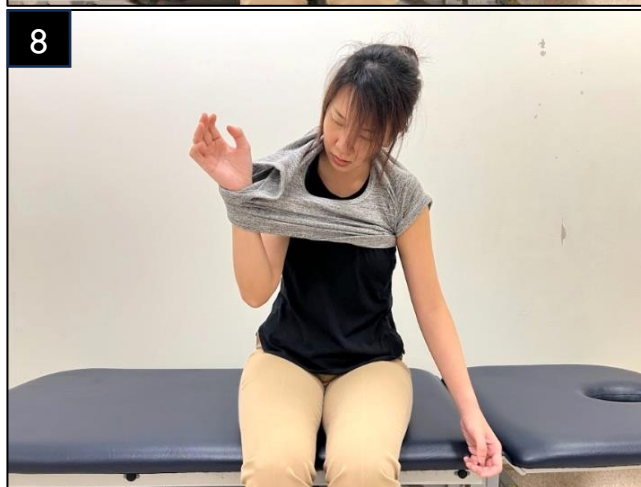
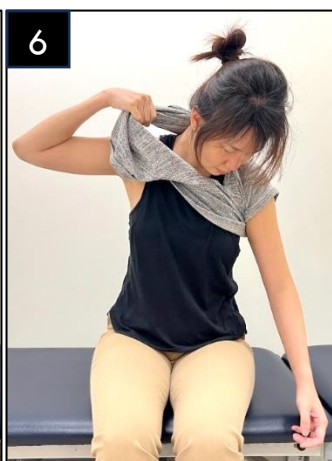
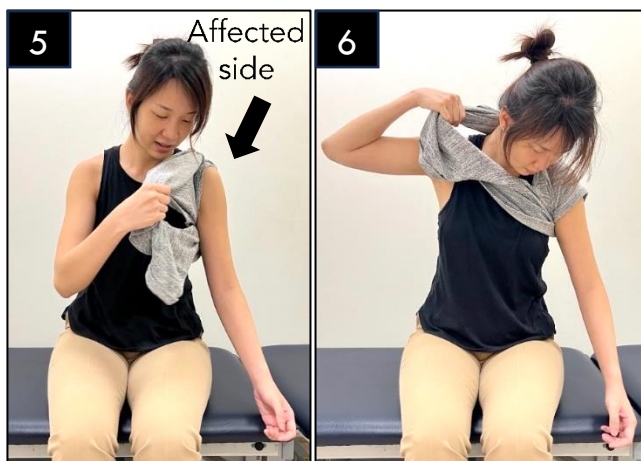
1. Choose clothes that are stretchy and loose-fitting.
2. Avoid clothes with small buttons and zips or clothes that are tight-fitting.
3. Wear underwear that are larger in size and easier to pull up with one hand.

3A. Wearing a shirt



1. Sit on a stable surface with your arm (*affected side*) by your side.
2. Lay the front of your shirt face down on your lap.
3. Use your other hand (*unaffected side*) to gather the sleeve (same side as your affected arm).
4. Put your arm (*affected side*) through the sleeve of your shirt and bring it up to your shoulder.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

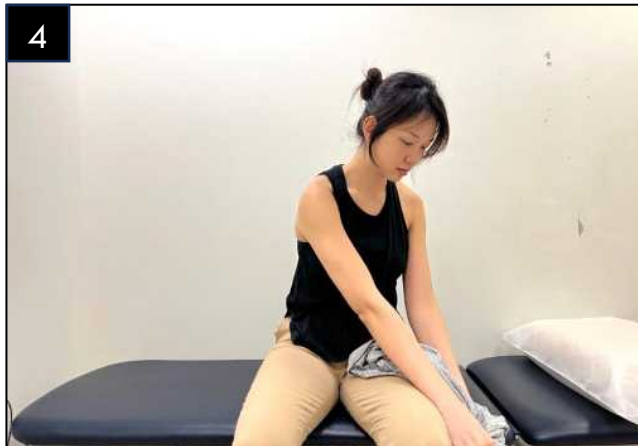
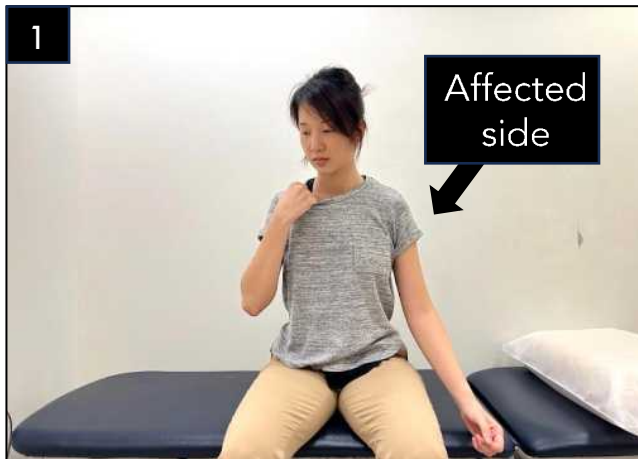


5. Pull the collar of the shirt over your head.

6. Place your arm (*unaffected side*) through the remaining sleeve of your shirt.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

3B. Removing a shirt



1. Sit on a stable surface with your arm (*affected side*) placed by your side.

2. Gather the neckline of the shirt with your other hand (*unaffected side*).

3. Pull your shirt in an upwards direction over your head and off your shoulders.

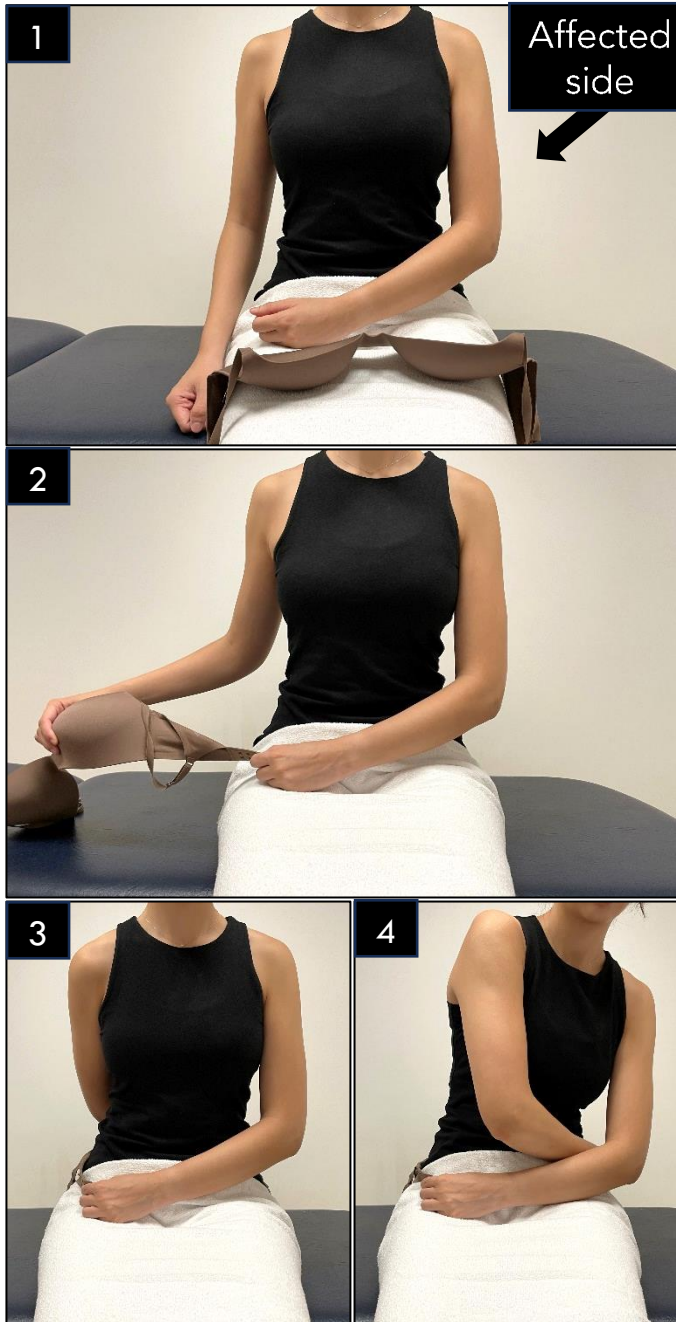
4. Gently slip the sleeve off your arm (*affected side*).

[\[Back to top\]](#)

4. Modified Method of Wearing a Bra

Please do not move your affected arm unless instructed to by your doctor or therapist. You may consider wearing loose sports bras, bras with front clasps, or shirts with bra pads sewn in to ease this process.

4A. Wearing a bra



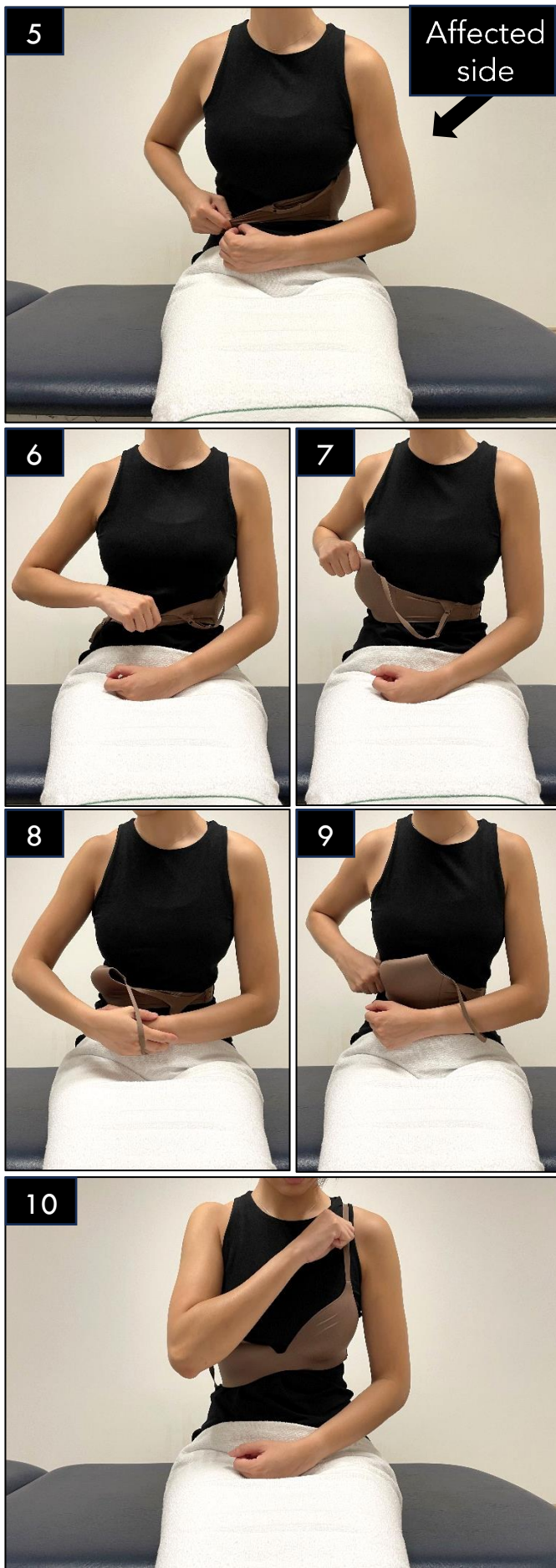
1. Keep your affected arm resting on your lap.

2. Place your bra face down on your lap.

3. Using your hand (*affected side*), hold on to one side of the bra clasp.

4. Using your other hand (*unaffected side*), reach around your back and pull the strap across your body.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

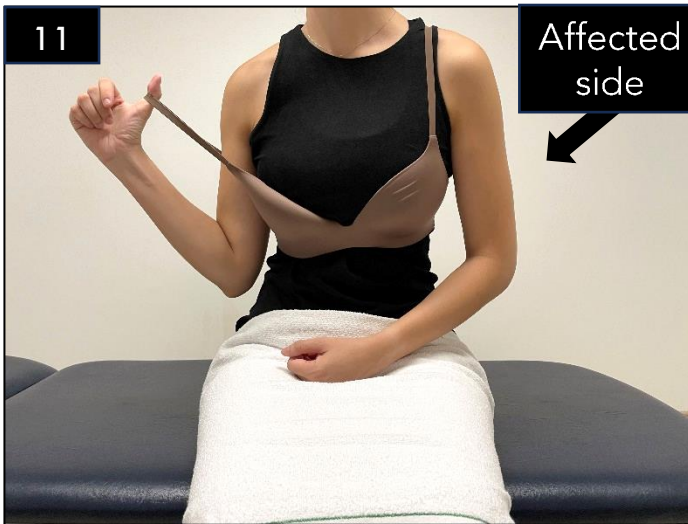


5. Fasten the bra while stabilizing it on the side of your body.

6. Shift the bra around till the strap (*affected side*) is lying directly under your hand (*affected side*).

7. Gently slip the strap up the side of your arm (*affected side*).

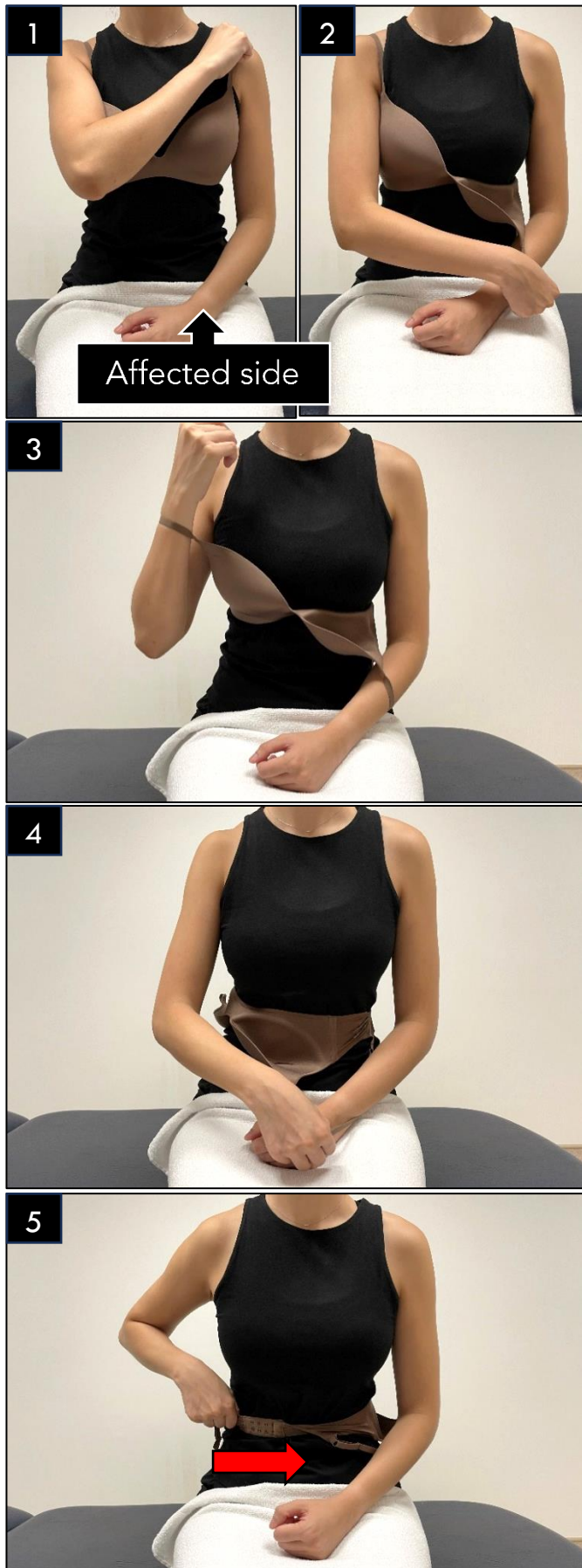
[\[Back to top\]](#)



8. Reposition the bra, then slide your other hand (*unaffected side*) through the strap.
9. Lift the strap onto your shoulder.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

4B. Removing a bra



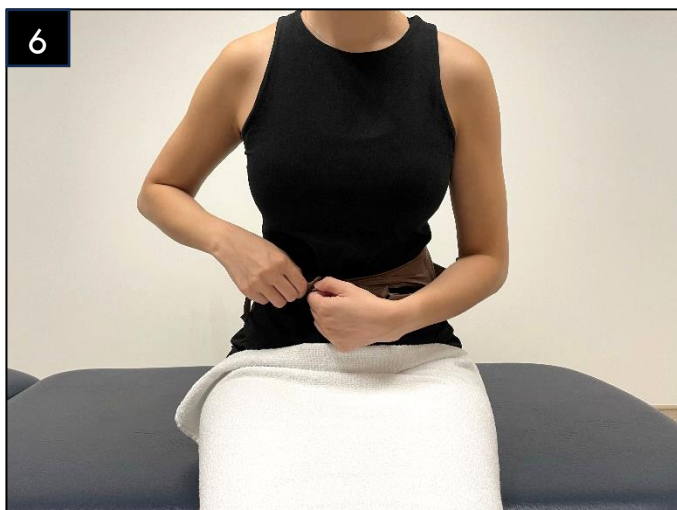
1. Use your other hand (*unaffected side*) to slip the bra strap off your shoulder (*affected side*).

2. Slip the bra strap off your other shoulder (*unaffected side*) and off the arm.

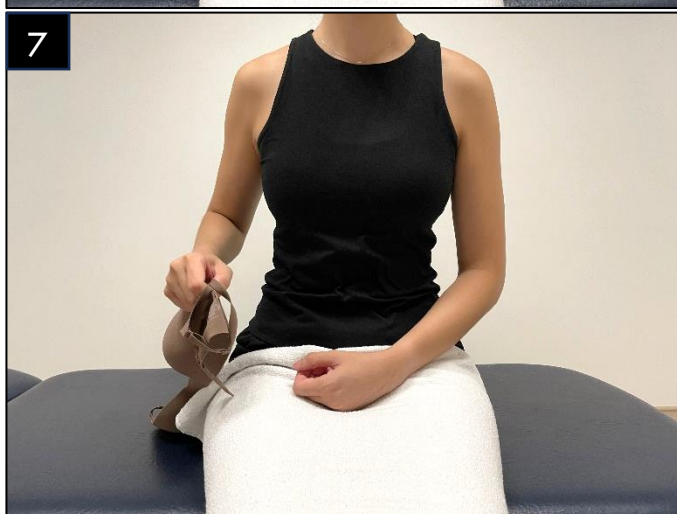
3. Use your other arm (*unaffected side*) to remove the bra strap from your arm (*affected side*).

4. Shift the bra around until the clasps are at the front of your body.

[\[Back to top\]](#)



5. Unclasp the bra and remove it.



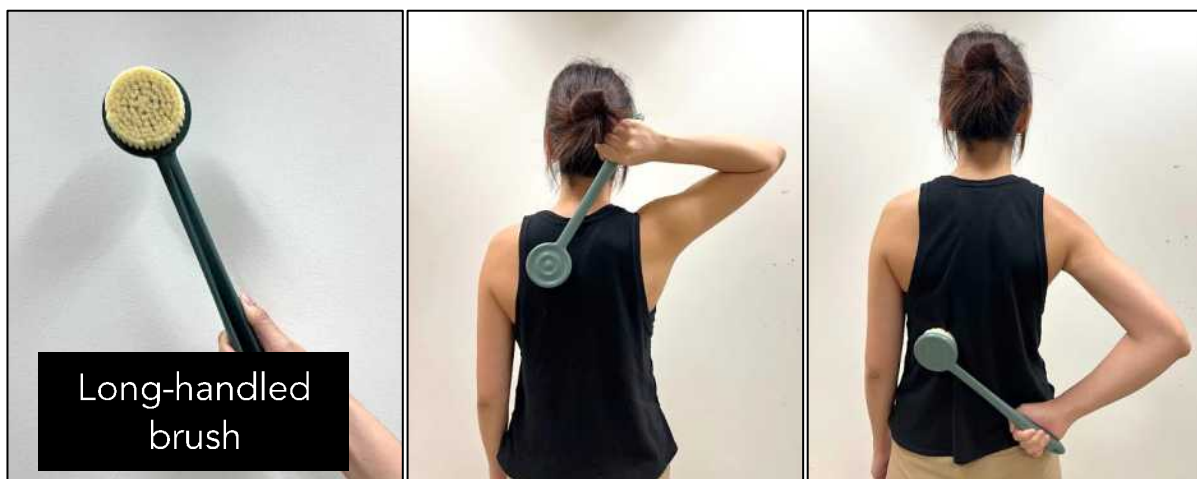
[\[Back to top\]](#)

5. Modified Method for Showering

Please do not move your affected arm unless you have been instructed to by your doctor or therapist.

5A. Tips for showering

- Keep your stitches dry in the initial stages of your recovery by covering the surgical site with plastic wrap and tape.
- You may consider using a no-rinse shampoo cap if it is difficult to wash your hair whilst keeping your wound and dressing dry. You may also consider going to the nearest hair salon for hair washing services.
- Do consider showering in a seated position for your safety.
- To clean the armpit of your affected arm, lean forward slightly and let the affected arm dangle. Use a wet wipe instead of water to clean your armpit.
- Use a scalp massager to apply shampoo and lather it.
- Use a long-handled brush to wash your back and other parts of your body that are hard to reach.



[\[Back to top\]](#)