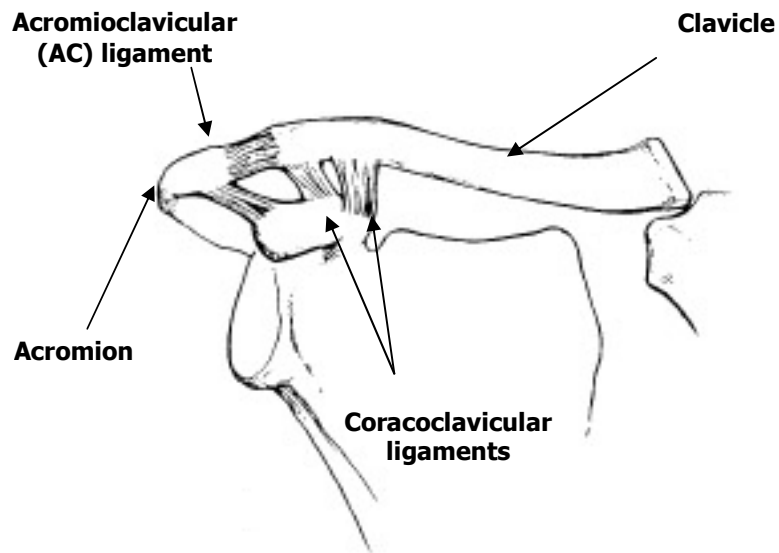


# ACROMIOCLAVICULAR (AC) JOINT INJURIES

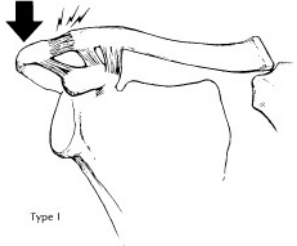
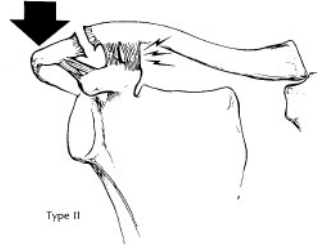
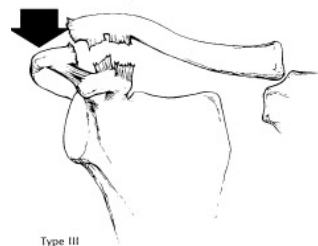
## 1. Understanding AC Joint Injuries

- The AC joint is formed between the clavicle (collar-bone) and the acromion (point of the shoulder).
- It is supported by three major ligaments. One AC ligament sits on the top of the joint, and two coracoclavicular ligaments sit under the joint.
- It is commonly injured as a result of a fall onto the shoulder or onto an outstretched hand.



## 2. Know the facts

**FACT:** There are 5 types of AC joint injury. Types 1, 2 and 3 are the most common.

Type 1:	Type 2:	Type 3:
Sprain of the AC ligament only	Tear of the AC ligament and sprain of the coracoclavicular ligaments	Tear of all three ligaments
		

### **FACT:**

Type 1 and 2 AC joint injuries will take between 3 to 6 weeks to heal. Type 3, 4 and 5 injuries will take longer and you may be referred on to an orthopaedic doctor (your physiotherapist should discuss this with you).

## 3. Tips to help your recovery

The following is important over the first 2 – 3 days following an injury.

**Rest** your shoulder where possible, but you should try to keep it mobile (see the exercises overleaf). You may be provided with a sling or taping to assist you in the early stages after injury.

**Ice** applied to the shoulder wrapped in a damp towel for 10-15 minutes 3-4 times daily for the first 2 days after an injury or following a 'flare-up'.

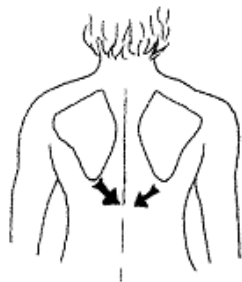
### 3. Exercises to try

#### Exercise 1. *Scapula (Shoulder Blade) Retraction*

Squeeze your shoulder blades against your chest wall, pulling them in and down

Hold for 10 seconds  
Repeat 10 times  
Do 3 sets per day

Try to adopt this position whenever you move your shoulder



#### Exercise 2. *Assisted Shoulder Flexion*

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Using a stick and your good arm to help, slowly raise your arms up over your head and slowly down again.

Repeat 10 times  
Do 3 sets per day



#### Exercise 3. *Trapezius Stretch*

Gently grasp the side of your head and tilt head away from your affected side until a gentle stretch is felt.

Hold 30 seconds  
Repeat 2-3 times  
Do 3 per day



#### Exercise 4. *Shoulder Elevation*

Using a stick, push your affected arm out in front, about 30° from the side. If you feel any pain don't go any further.

Repeat 10 times  
Do 3 Sets per day



### 4. Return to Activity/Sport

Return to activity and sport will depend greatly on the type of injury you have sustained. It is recommended you adhere to the follow up plan suggested by the emergency department physiotherapist to ensure optimal recovery time.

### 5. Follow-Up

- If you have private health insurance or the injury is WorkCover, please follow up on your management with a private Physiotherapist.
- If you have a private Physiotherapist you already know, please provide them with the referral letter from the Emergency Department.
- If you have no private health insurance, it is not a WorkCover injury and you live in the Orange area you can get followed up at the Orange Base Hospital Physiotherapy Department, please provide them with the referral letter from the Emergency Department.

Orange Health Service  
Physiotherapy Department  
**6369 3300**