

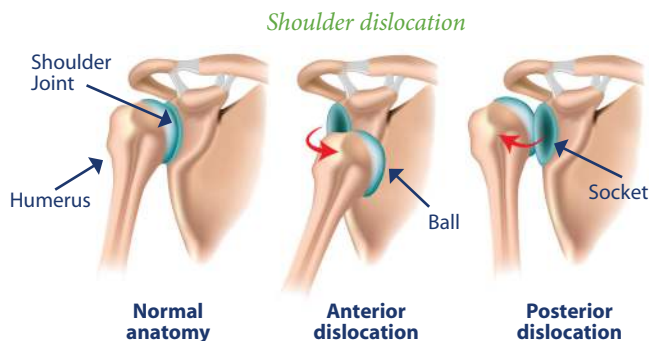
Traumatic Shoulder Dislocation

“Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients.”

Marybeth Ezaki, MD, Past President, American Society for Surgery of the Hand

What is a shoulder dislocation?

A traumatic shoulder dislocation occurs during a specific injury or accident when the upper arm (humerus) is forced out of the shoulder joint. This may cause damage to the ligaments, muscles and tendons that surround the shoulder joint and a portion of the ball (humerus) and socket (glenoid) bones. A fracture to the ball or socket may occur with the injury as well.



What causes a traumatic dislocation?

Shoulder dislocations can occur from repetitive trauma, an injury or accident. Dislocations occur when the shoulder is forced out of place from falls or sports injuries.



Example of a fall causing a shoulder dislocation

What are the symptoms of a traumatic shoulder dislocation?

A shoulder dislocation may cause extreme sharp pain, numbness, tingling, weakness and difficulty moving the arm. The shoulder may also feel and visibly appear to be out of place.

What is the treatment of a shoulder dislocation?

To confirm the severity of the dislocation, X-rays may be ordered by a healthcare professional. It is important to immobilize the shoulder after the dislocation. Therapy may also be started after a brief period of immobilization. If dislocation occurs regularly and pain affects daily function, surgery may be recommended.



A hand therapist treats the hand and upper extremity, including the shoulder

What can a hand therapist do for me?

A hand therapist/upper extremity specialist is important in the treatment of a traumatic shoulder dislocation. Each traumatic shoulder dislocation is different and will require a thorough evaluation to determine the best treatment approach. Therapy will focus on protecting the shoulder, decreasing pain and improving motion through the use of activities, exercises and work- or sports-specific tasks. A hand therapist will also work closely with the physician and patient to improve shoulder function.

To locate a hand therapist in your area, visit the American Society of Hand Therapists at www.asht.org or call 856-380-6856.