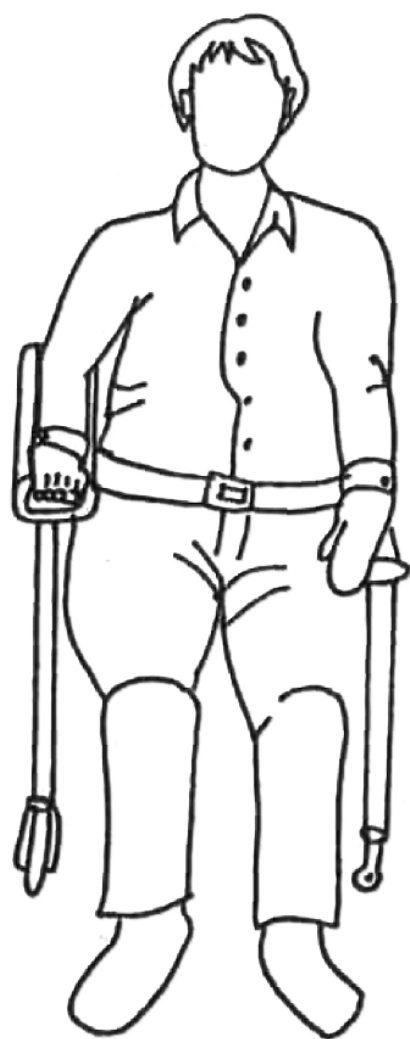


Prevention of **Shoulder Pain** Following a **Stroke**

Richardson Hospital Center

Shoulder pain is a common condition that affects about 72% of people who sustained a stroke. To prevent shoulder pain the following measures can be taken by patients, families, or caregivers.

DO: Practice Proper Positioning



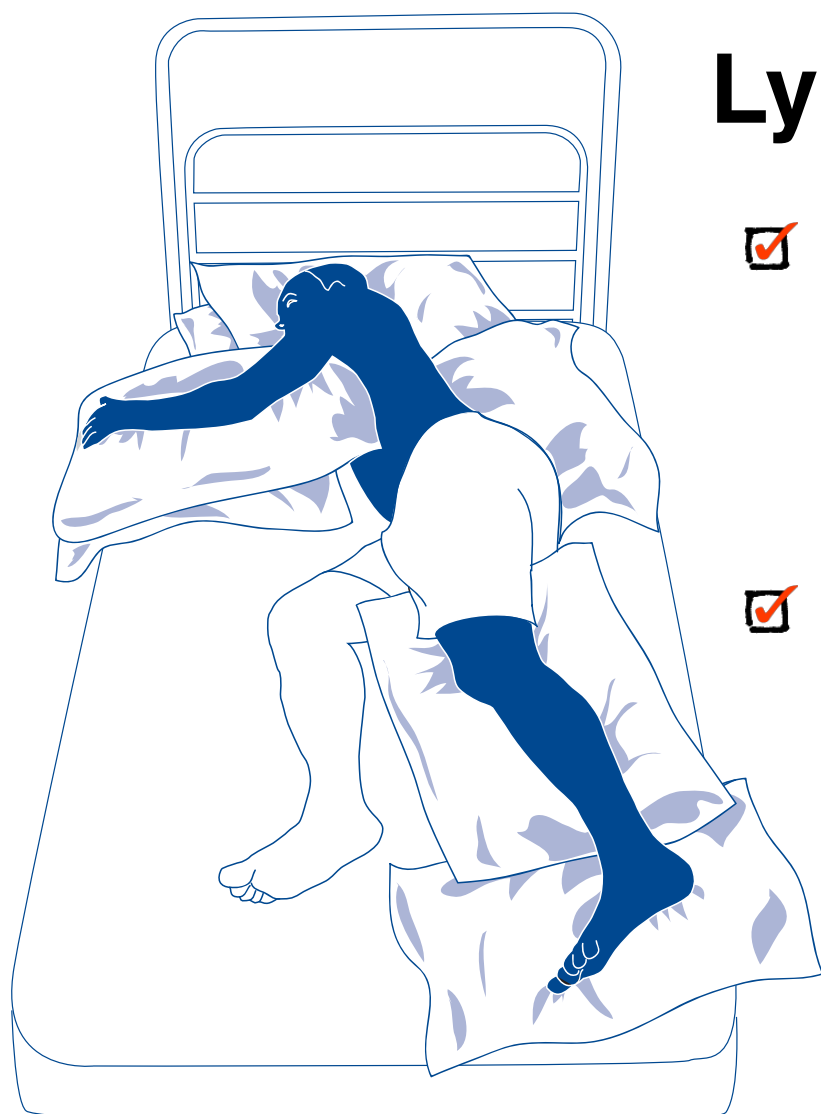
Sitting in a wheelchair

- Sit with back leaning against the chair with the head, spine and pelvis aligned
- Affected arm must be supported by a pillow, a lap tray or a trough
- Feet are shoulder width apart and rested on footrests or flat on the floor



Lying on back

- Place one or two pillows under the head, the affected arm, and beneath the knees
- Feet are placed in a neutral position



Lying on unaffected side

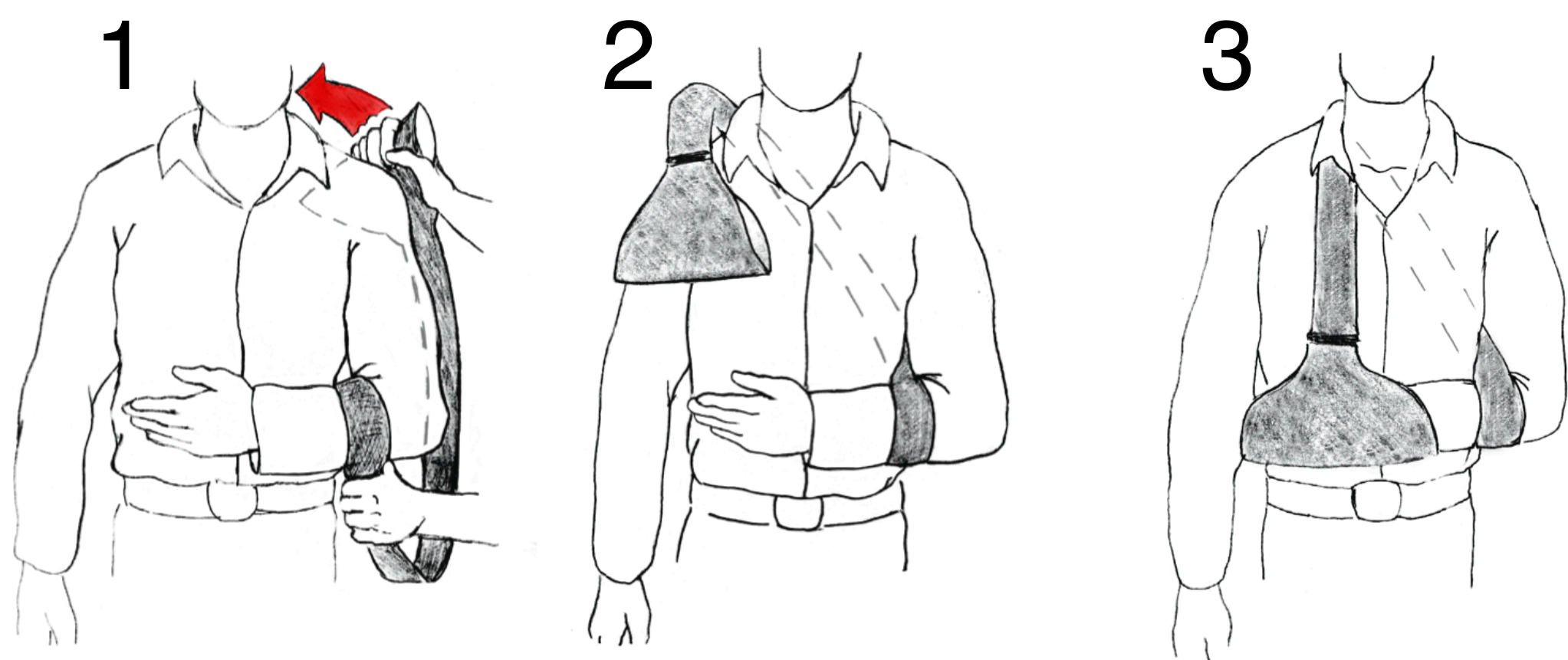
- Place one or two pillows under the head, under the weaker leg, and behind the back
- Bring affected arm forward and comfortably rest it on a pillow



Lying on affected side

- Place one or two pillows under the head, under the stronger leg (should be bent), and behind the back
- Make sure the weaker leg is straight

DO: Learn to apply arm sling correctly



1. Slip affected forearm through small loop
2. Pull strap across back and the top of the unaffected shoulder
3. Place affected hand into large loop so hand and wrist are supported

- Wear arm sling only during transfers and walking

DON'T

- Pull on the affected arm during transfers or walking
- Wrap arm sling around the neck
- Passively lift arm higher than shoulder level (neither front nor side).
- Leave the sling on while the patient is sitting in the chair

References

1. Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care. Canadian Stroke Strategy. Update 2010.
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4. Left Arm Sling. Stroke Strategy Southwestern Ontario & London Health Sciences Centre. 2012.

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