

# Traumatic Shoulder Dislocation



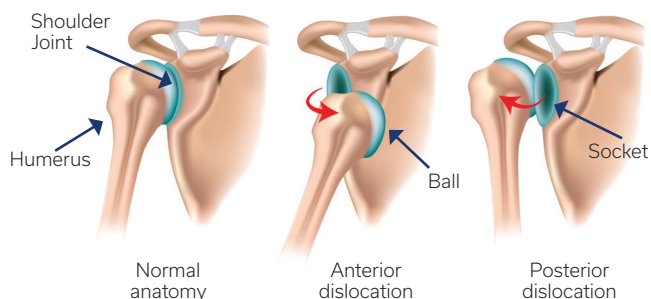
**“Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients.”**

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 bone (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.

*Shoulder dislocation*



## 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 protect the shoulder after the dislocation with a sling or brace. Therapy may also be started after a brief period of protection. If dislocation occurs regularly and pain affects daily use, a doctor may recommend surgery.

*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 doctor and patient to improve shoulder use.

To locate a hand therapist in your area, visit the American Society of Hand Therapists at [www.asht.org](http://www.asht.org) or call 856-380-6856.