

Overview of Dr. Roache's Orthopaedic Specialty Care

Your doctor has determined that your injury may require orthopaedic treatment. Dr. Roache runs a private orthopaedic practice in San Francisco and has been recruited to provide you with the highest quality care.

Dr. Roache is Board Certified in Orthopaedic Surgery and Board Certified in Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, an active member of the Arthroscopic Association of North America, the European Shoulder Association, and the International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine.

He completed an AO fellowship in Zurich, Switzerland in rotator cuff surgery, and a fellowship in shoulder and upper extremity reconstruction surgery in San Francisco at California Pacific Medical Center.

He subspecializes in arthroscopic surgical treatments of rotator cuff and knee injuries, and is actively involved in research on surgical treatments for these injuries.



Author of

The Shoulder Patients' Handbook

*A Shoulder Surgeon's Guide to Rotator Cuff Injuries
and Other Common Shoulder Problems*

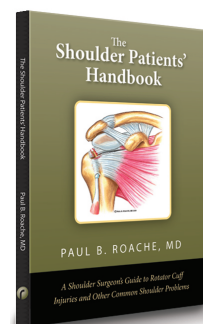


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Introduction

Welcome to orthopaedic specialty care by Dr. Roache. He and his team are committed to providing you the highest standard of orthopaedic care in order to treat your injury.

Here are a few important details to help with your visit:

Appointment Time

You will need to check in 1 hour prior to your appointment time to complete the necessary registration and preparation.

X-rays

If x-rays have not been completed recently for the injury that Dr. Roache is treating, they will be taken after you register on the day of your appointment.

MRI

If you have had an MRI, please bring your report and a copy of the CD with you to expedite your care. Dr. Roache's Patient Coordinator will let you know during your pre-appointment phone call if we already have a copy of your MRI on file.

Workers' Compensation Overview

Your medical care is covered by Workers' Compensation, a division of your employer's insurance. Dr. Roache's team will guide you through the process of receiving care through Workers' Compensation. You will receive a detailed guide at your initial appointment, and his staff will help answer any questions you might have.

What is an orthopaedic surgeon?

An orthopaedic surgeon is a doctor who specializes in surgical and non-surgical treatments of muscle, tendon, nerve, bone and joint injuries. The primary role of the orthopaedic surgeon is to determine the nature of your injury and give you a precise diagnosis and treatment plan.

What is the role of the orthopaedic surgeon in the Workers' Compensation Clinic?

Dr. Roache, your orthopaedic surgeon, will determine if your injury requires surgery. He will discuss all treatment options with you, surgical and non-surgical, and give you a comprehensive treatment plan. If your care requires the direct supervision of an orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Roache will manage your care until it is completed.

Overview of Orthopaedic Care

Overview of orthopaedic care in the California Workers' Compensation system

1. Doctor-ordered care will need to be authorized (or "certified") by Workers' Compensation Insurance Company.
2. Doctor visits and reports are required every 30-45 days. If you are on "Modified Work," some employers require reports every 2 weeks.
3. If doctor-ordered care is not authorized, you should check with your adjuster or case manager. In some cases, patients will be represented by attorneys to assist with planning care.
4. When treatment is completed, you will no longer need to be seen as regularly, and future medical care can be scheduled at a later date. This will be outlined in the doctor's final report. (Workers' Compensation refers to this as "Permanent and Stationary Report" or "PR-4 Report").
5. Sometimes, either the patient or the insurance company will request an independent evaluation called a "Qualified Medical Examination" (QME). This is very common and is independent of treatment. It can be requested at any time, but patients often find it useful if there is a delay in getting treatment approved.

Important Details

How to make a follow up appointment

Dr. Roache will provide you with a treatment plan consistent with your diagnosis. You will be given instructions for when to follow up with the doctor during your visit. The front desk will confirm this as you leave.

Please arrive 20-30 minutes earlier than your scheduled appointment time to ensure prompt care. Attending your appointments is extremely important. If you cannot make an appointment, please contact the clinic and reschedule. If you miss appointments and we are unable to reach you, this may cause problems with your care. The adjuster may conclude that you are not compliant in your care and close the case. This is easily avoided by contacting us at the clinic.

Medications

Medications are prescribed as necessary. These may be dispensed from the clinic or written for your pharmacy. Narcotic pain medications may be needed to help with severe pain before and after surgery. There are clear FDA guidelines for appropriate and safe use of these medications. If a situation arises where there is a question about the appropriate and safe use

of narcotic pain medications beyond the usual orthopaedic patient demands, consultation and treatment by a pain management specialist will be required.

Modified work and work restrictions

During your recovery, it may not be possible to perform the regular duties of your job. These are the duties your job required you to perform before your injury. The requirements of your regular work are reviewed at the initial consultation with Dr. Roache.

The goals of “work modifications” and “work restrictions” are to:

1. Protect you from further injury;
2. Allow you to heal and recover from the injury while under treatment;
3. Permit you to continue working and earn your full salary;
4. Demonstrate to your employer that you are able, available and willing to work, albeit it with restrictions to your usual duties.

If the employer does not follow the doctor-ordered work restrictions, they are in violation of the California Labor Code. You will need to notify your adjuster and the Human Resource Department at your place of employment. If you have a case manager or attorney, you must notify them as well.

Rules of work status modifications¹

The doctor’s role is to determine which duties of work you are able to perform without furthering the injury, and while allowing you to heal and recover during treatment.

The employer must determine if they have work that meets these modifications. If they are able to accommodate the restrictions, they will have you return to work. If they are not able to accommodate the restrictions, they will place you off work. If the employer does not follow the restrictions, you must notify your Human Resources department and your adjuster. If you have a case manager or attorney you must notify them as well.

How restrictions are specified

The typical format for applying work restrictions is based off of an 8 hour work day and 40 hour work week. While this does not cover all types of employment, it is the accepted basis for determining restrictions.

1. Some employers will have time limitations for how long modified work is available. Check with your employer to make sure you understand your situation.

Specific actions at work are addressed (e.g., “no lifting over 10 lbs.”). General restrictions such as “may work 6 hours of regular” or “may perform 75% of usual work” are not made, even if the employer requests such restrictions.

How long can you be on modified work?

Work restrictions or modified work is only appropriate for a short period of time. Depending on your injury and diagnosis and your treatment this period of time may be anywhere from a few days to six months. There are strict guidelines that apply to when modified work is appropriate and how long it is appropriate. Once you exceed the time interval that is appropriate for work restrictions, the employer may request an evaluation by a neutral MD to determine your level of ability to work on the WC guidelines. If this happens it is binding. In order to avoid this, being on modified work for as little time as necessary for recovery is advisable.

Returning to Regular Work Without Restrictions – General Guidelines

You will return to work without restrictions as treatment progresses. Some pain or discomfort may persist when you first return to unrestricted regular work. Often a “trial of regular work” is given when a patient first returns to unrestricted duty.

Sometimes, even if the doctor deems it safe to go back to regular work with no restrictions, the patient may not agree. In these situations, there are several ways to resolve the discrepancy. A QME can be requested, you can transfer to a different doctor, or you can contact your attorney if you have one.

What happens if you are unable to return to work without restrictions?

The goal is to treat the injury and return to work without restrictions. However, this is not always possible. In these cases, the restrictions become permanent. Permanent restrictions can affect your ability to return to your present job and will affect the types of jobs you are able to get in the future.

Completing Care

When you have completed all the medical care that was necessary for you to recover from your injury, this is considered the end of medical care. This is otherwise known as maximum medical improvement, or MMI.

At this point you will be released or graduated from orthopaedic care and you will not be required to come back for follow-up visits with Dr. Roache. You will be moved to a category called “future medical care.” In this category if you have trouble or questions related to the injury, you will make an appointment directly with Dr. Roache. You can make this appointment whenever you need it.

The details of future medical care are outlined by Dr. Roache in your final report. In Worker’s Compensation this report is called a “PR 4 report” or “permanent and stationary report.”

Common Terminology

- **Primary Treating Physician:** The general doctor or practitioner who is overseeing your care. They will usually refill your medications and determine if work modifications are needed. If your care has been transferred to Dr. Roache, he is designated as your Primary Treating Physician.
- **Adjustor:** The agent for the insurance company who is responsible for monitoring your care. If you are having administrative difficulties (such as not receiving compensation or not getting care approved) your first step should be to contact your adjustor.
- **Nurse Case Manager:** The nurse who is assigned to ensure that appropriate care is being given in a timely manner. Nurse Case Managers can be very helpful in getting authorization for care.
- **Work Status:** Any work functions you are currently performing are called your “Work Status”. For example, you may have lifting restrictions of 10 lbs. If your employer is able to accommodate those restrictions then you are “working with restrictions”. If they are not able to accommodate those restrictions then you are “not working because modified duty is not available”.
- **Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI):** Your highest level of improvement after all necessary care has been completed.
- **Permanent and Stationary:** When all necessary care has been completed and you have reached your highest level of improvement (called “Maximal Medical Improvement”, or MMI), then you will not need care as regularly. You are given a “Permanent and Stationary” (or PR-4) status. However, most patients are given a “Future Medical Care” status (see below).
- **Future Medical Care Status:** When you no longer require on-going care, most patients are placed in the “Future Medical Care” category. This means you can seek medical care in the future, as needed.

Clinical Research Participation

You may be asked to participate in Dr. Roache’s clinical research. This is completely voluntary and will not affect your care in any way. Participation is anonymous. It involves answering a series of surveys which track levels of pain, motor function, and overall wellbeing over the course of your treatment.

Summary

Dr. Roache and his team work with your clinic to provide you the highest level of orthopaedic care. Our goal is to treat you safely, quickly and return you to your pre-injury ability and function.

Overview of Surgery with Dr. Roache

If surgery is needed to treat your injury or condition, a comprehensive timeline is followed to prepare you for the procedure and to ensure you stay safe and comfortable after surgery.

Below, you will find a brief overview of this process to help you understand the steps of your treatment. A more detailed explanation of these steps has been included on the following page.

Surgical Timeline Summary

1. Pre-operative medical clearance (if required)
2. Surgical authorization
3. Surgical date and location (information mailed)
4. Post operative appointment with Dr. Roache scheduled
5. Post operative physical therapy (PT) scheduled
6. Medications made available before surgery
7. Ice therapy or ice bags before surgery
8. Nothing by mouth the night before surgery
9. Arrive early the day of surgery
10. Chaperone/ride home after surgery and for the first evening
11. Sling or crutches after surgery
12. Dressing change and shower the next day
13. Home exercises beginning the day following surgery
14. PT starts within a few days after surgery
15. Post operative appointment with Dr. Roache

Details Explained

- 1. Pre-operative medical clearance:** The need for medical evaluation and clearance is determined before surgery. In general, you will need medical clearance if you are over 54 years of age, have any medical problems (including well controlled hypertension), and your body mass index (BMI) will also be assessed. If you require clearance, a pre-operative lab appointment and a pre-operative physical will be scheduled.
- 2. Surgery approval:** Dr. Roache will create a surgical plan for you after the decision to undergo surgery is made in clinic. His surgery scheduler will also submit any requests for authorization. This usually takes between 10-20 business days to get the necessary approvals. Sometimes this requires Dr. Roache to speak with a reviewing surgeon regarding your surgery. A tentative surgery date is planned, which allows time for any pre-medical clearance to be authorized.
- 3. Post-operative PT:** Post-operative physical therapy is authorized at the same time as the surgery. Once the surgical date is confirmed the initial PT appointments are also scheduled for right after surgery, per Dr. Roache's instructions. A post-operative appointment to see Dr. Roache is also made at this time.
- 4. Ice therapy:** Typically ice therapy using standard ice or cold therapy coolers are used as part of the treatment after surgery. This request is made along with the surgery request by the surgery scheduler. If the cold therapy cooler is approved it will arrive through the vendor of the insurance company's choosing. If the cooler is not approved or has not arrived before surgery, use standard ice. If it is delivered before the surgery, do not bring it with you to the surgery. Please disregard any instruction by the vendor or by phone telling you to bring the unit to surgery. This is incorrect.
- 5. Medications:** You should receive your medications for post-operative discomfort one week or more prior to surgery. The surgery scheduler will ensure that your medications have been ordered 2 weeks prior to your surgery. You must not use this medication prior to surgery. Antibiotics are given at surgery and you do not need them after the procedure.
- 6. Pre-operative appointment:** Dr. Roache will normally see you 1-2 weeks before the surgery to answer any further questions and ensure that everything is ready for your procedure.
- 7. Surgery information:** The scheduler will send you information about the surgical process. This will include the time, date and location of the surgery; the time you must arrive before surgery; and basic information about having surgery. The Surgery Center will call and give you further information. Their nurse will also need to collect information from you about your medical history. Dr. Roache performs the majority of his surgeries at the Presidio Surgery Center in San Francisco. The Center is part of the California Pacific Medical Center and is his primary practice location. St. Francis Memorial Hospital is his secondary practice location. Surgeries are typically scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays. The location and date will be clearly specified in your surgical plan.

8. **Nothing by mouth the night before surgery:** After midnight the night before your surgery, it is important that you do not consume any liquids or solids for the safety of the anesthesia. This includes no sips of water or ice cubes. However, if the nurse instructs you to take blood pressure medication with sips of water, it is OK to do so.
9. **Arrive early before your scheduled time:** The arrival time is specified in your surgical information.
10. **Ride home from surgery:** For your safety, you will need someone to accompany you home from the surgery.
11. **Sling or crutches:** If you are having shoulder surgery you will require a sling, and Dr. Roache will give you instructions on how to use it correctly. Typically you are allowed to do pendulum exercises out of the sling, but should otherwise stay in the sling as instructed. If you are having knee surgery, you will be encouraged to put your weight on your leg but will most likely need crutches to give you added comfort and security.
12. **Chaperone the first night after surgery:** You will need someone to be with you or close by to assist you the first night.
13. **Dressing change and shower the next day:** Arthroscopic surgery uses sterile fluid to fill the space for surgery. The knee and shoulder absorb approximately ½ a liter of fluid. This fluid will drain out during the first 24-48 hours after surgery, and carries some blood with it. Its appearance can look like red Gatorade or may appear semi-bloody. There is no reason to be alarmed, but you may call if you have any questions. You can shower and wash the operative site with soap and water the day after surgery. You should then dry the area and cover the wound with band aids.