

Stiff Elbow Release Surgery

What Is Stiff Elbow Release Surgery?

Stiff elbow release surgery is a procedure to restore movement in an elbow that has become tight, restricted, or locked due to injury, arthritis, or previous surgery. If your elbow won't bend or straighten fully — and non-surgical treatments haven't worked — surgery can help free the joint and improve your range of motion.

The goal is to reduce pain, restore flexibility, and allow you to use your arm more comfortably in daily life.

When Is Surgery Recommended?

You may be offered elbow release surgery if:

- You have long-standing stiffness or loss of elbow movement
- You can't fully bend or straighten your arm
- Your symptoms are affecting daily tasks like dressing, eating, or lifting
- Physiotherapy and other treatments haven't improved your range
- Scans show scar tissue, bone spurs, or joint damage

Elbow stiffness may follow fractures, dislocations, arthritis, or surgery — and can severely impact independence and quality of life.

What Does The Surgery Involve?

The procedure can be performed using **keyhole (arthroscopic)** or **open surgery**, depending on the cause and severity of the stiffness. It is done under general anaesthetic and usually takes 1 to 2 hours.

During the operation, your surgeon may:

- Remove scar tissue or inflamed joint lining
- Trim bone spurs or loose fragments
- Release tight ligaments or capsule tissue
- Smooth or reshape joint surfaces

Your surgeon will choose the safest and most effective approach based on your elbow condition.



Recovery And Rehabilitation

Early movement is crucial after elbow release surgery. You may wear a brace or splint briefly, but physiotherapy will start within days to maintain the new range of motion.

Recovery may include:

- Light daily activities: 2 to 4 weeks
- Return to work: 4 to 8 weeks (depending on the type of job)
- Full recovery: 3 to 6 months

A tailored rehab programme with close physiotherapy support is key to long-term success.

Risks And Complications

Elbow release is generally safe, but like all surgery, it carries potential risks:

- Infection
- Nerve injury (due to proximity of nerves around the elbow)
- Bleeding or swelling
- Recurrence of stiffness
- Ongoing pain or weakness

Your surgeon will explain these risks and how they apply to your case.

Will I Regain Full Movement?

Most patients see a significant improvement in movement and function. Full range may not always be possible — especially if the stiffness has been present for a long time — but surgery can make a big difference to pain, independence, and arm use.

The best results are achieved with early physiotherapy and a committed approach to rehab.

Why Choose Midlands Orthopaedic Clinic?

At Midlands Orthopaedic Clinic, our elbow specialists are experts in treating complex joint stiffness using both open and arthroscopic techniques. We offer fast diagnosis, advanced surgical care, and close collaboration with physiotherapists to give you the best chance of regaining comfort and mobility.

We tailor every treatment to your lifestyle and goals, ensuring a personalised and effective approach.



Get In Touch

If your elbow feels stiff, locked, or painful and is affecting your daily life, we're here to help.

Contact Midlands Orthopaedic Clinic today to arrange a consultation with an experienced elbow surgeon. Call us or use our online enquiry form.