



Exercise guide

Shoulder

Throughout the following exercises, the emphasis is on slow, controlled movement.

If you are currently receiving physiotherapy only do the exercises that your therapist has prescribed under your current treatment plan.

When carrying out the exercises make sure you are safe and stable, using support of counters or tables if needed. Make sure all exercises are pain free and if they cause pain stop doing them or go to an easier exercise. Do not exert yourself beyond your own capabilities.

Shoulder range of movement

Perform each of the following exercises 10 times before moving on to the next one or as directed by your physiotherapist.

Abduction

- Hold a broom handle in both hands
- Take your affected arm straight out to the side assisting the movement by pushing through the broom with the good arm
- Continue the movement as far as comfortable before returning to the starting position
- Try and prevent your affected shoulder from hitching up for as long as possible

Flexion

- Take the affected arm straight in front of your body, again assisting the movement with your good arm
- Stop at the point of discomfort and return to the starting position

Lateral rotation

- Tuck the elbow of your affected side next to your body.
- Place the end of the broom into this hand and gently push through the broom to rotate the shoulder
- Stop at the point of discomfort and return to the starting position

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Shoulder medial rotation

- This exercise can be performed in standing or sitting
- Take the hand of the affected side behind your back
- Use the good arm to drape a towel over your shoulder and grasp it with the lower hand



- Gently pull the towel upwards with the non-affected hand to feel a stretch in the symptomatic shoulder
- Hold in this position for 10-15 seconds and then release.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Shoulder PNF patterns

- Lie flat on your back.
- Take your hand on the symptomatic side down to the opposite hip
- Start the movement with the palm facing the floor and thumb pointing away from you
- Slowly raise your arm above your head while rotating the hand
- When at the end of the movement the palm should be facing toward your head and thumb pointing behind you
- Repeat the movement in reverse to the starting point.

For the second part of this exercise start with your affected side alongside your body and palm flat on the floor

- Slowly take the hand toward the opposite shoulder
- Finish the movement with the hand beside your head and palm facing you
- This can be progressed by applying resistance with your other hand or using a light weight such as a bottle of water.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Shoulder girdle retraction

- Start lying on your back with your arms resting at your sides
- Slowly draw both shoulder blades back and down
- Return to the starting position and repeat
- This exercise can also be performed in a seated position
- Start in a seated position with your arms resting at your side
- Maintain a flat back and keep your chest upright
- Slowly draw both shoulder blades back and down
- Return to the starting position and repeat

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Rotator cuff isometric strengthening – lying

- Lie on your back and raise the affected arm into the air
- Apply a light resistance with your opposite hand to the wrist
- Push against the resistance alternating movement toward your head, left side, feet and right side.
- Hold for around five seconds



This exercise can be progressed by increasing the resistance applied or the range of movement.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for five seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Rotator cuff strengthening – lateral rotation in side lying

- Start lying on your non-affected side
- Holding a light weight, tuck the upper elbow in to your side and bend it to 90 degrees
- Starting with the weight flat to the stomach, slowly raise by rotating at the shoulder
- Lift as far as comfortable before slowly controlling the movement back to the starting position
- Maintain the elbow at the side of the body throughout the exercise
- This exercise can also be performed using a household object such as a bottle of water or tin of beans

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 3-5 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Rotator cuff isometric strengthening – standing in doorframe

- Stand in a doorframe or against a wall with your symptomatic side closest to the frame
- Bend the elbow to 90 degrees, keeping it alongside your body at all times
- Position yourself so the back of your wrist is pressed against the doorframe before gently pushing in to it
- Hold for 5 seconds before releasing the pressure
- Stop immediately if this becomes painful
- Repeat this exercise but with the inner aspect of the wrist against the doorframe
- This exercise can also be performed using your other hand to provide resistance

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding five seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Rotator cuff strengthening – Theraband

- Anchor a length of exercise band to a suitable object
- Bend the elbow of your symptomatic side to 90 degrees and tuck it alongside your body
- Maintain the elbow position throughout this exercise
- Firstly stand with the symptomatic shoulder furthest from the band
- Take your hand across the body and grasp the band
- Slowly rotate the arm outwards as far as comfortable before controlling the movement to the starting position
- Repeat this exercise in reverse with the affected side closest to the band and starting with the arm rotated outwards
- Grasp the band, maintain elbow position next to your body and slowly rotate inwards
- Again ensure the return movement is always slow and controlled at all times



Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Bent-over rows

- This exercise can be performed in standing or with one hand and knee on a bed
- Take a small step forwards, resting your hand on the bent knee
- Bend forward at your hips, take a light weight in one hand and allow the arm to hang straight down
- Draw your shoulder blades back before slowly raising and bending at the elbow as far as able
- Lift the weight before controlling the movement to the starting position
- Repeat this exercise 10 times
- It is important to maintain a flat back throughout the whole movement
- This exercise can be progressed by the use of heavier weights or exercise bands

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Wall press up

- Start standing facing a wall
- Raise your hands and place them shoulder width apart on the wall
- Slowly lean forward, controlling the movement with your arms
- Once your chest reaches the wall slowly push back to straighten your arms and repeat

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.