

Physiotherapy

Shoulder class – week 2

Postural correction and improving shoulder range of movement

Stiff shoulders

If you have a stiff shoulder after a fracture or frozen shoulder capsular release, it's important to move the joint:

- as fully as possible
- as often as possible

The ligament “capsule” that supports the shoulder can become tight in some people. Good firm stretches can loosen it up.

Discomfort in stiff shoulders tends to be deep and aching, rather than sharp. Movement is unlikely to make your shoulder worse.

Shoulder impingements

Shoulders that don't move due to “impingement” can also become stiff. The lack of movement is often feels like a sharp sensation when the shoulder is in certain positions. Over time, this can become an ache due to the soft tissues becoming inflamed.



Patient Information

Many of the same exercises can be done as with a stiff shoulder, but you should respect the pain more.

- Move up to the limits of your pain
- Do not push through the pain

You'll probably benefit from the cuff strengthening or deltoid strengthening exercises below. You should also address any postural issues you have.

Postural correction

Good posture is important for people with shoulder injuries.

Some muscles that support your neck also attach to your shoulder blade. If the muscles are overactive, it can limit the motion of your shoulder blade. This can lead to shoulder impingement.

The following pages explain some simple range of movement, cuff strengthening and postural exercises you can do.

Patient Information

Self-assisted flexion



Use your uninjured arm to help lift your injured arm as high as possible to the front and, if possible, over your head. You can do this standing, sitting, or lying down on your back.

Repeat 10 times. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

You can use a wall to support the weight of your arm - walk your fingers up the wall as high as possible if you need to.

Patient Information

Stick assisted abduction

Abduction means to lift the limb away from the body and out to the side



Use a broom handle or walking stick to help lift your arm up to the side of your body.

Repeat 10 times. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

You can use a wall to support the weight of your arm - walk your fingers up the wall as high as possible if you need to.

Stick assisted lateral rotation



Keep your elbow tucked into your body. Use a broom handle or walking stick to help push your arm out to the side of your body.

Repeat 10 times. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

Patient Information

Assisted hand behind your back



Put your arm as far behind your back as possible. Use a broom handle, walking stick, or towel to help **pull your arm up your back** as far as possible.

Repeat 10 times. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

Pendular swing



Let your arm hang relaxed. Gently swing your arm:

- forwards and backwards
- side to side
- in circles

Do this for 1 or 2 minutes. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

Patient Information

Rotator cuff strengthening

The rotator cuff helps the rotation of the head of your humerus (the ball) in the cup of your shoulder blade (the socket). They're important for shoulder movement.



A. Lie on your back with your arm out to the side of your body and your elbow resting on a rolled towel or small pillow.

B. Rotate your forearm forwards.

C. Rotate your forearm backwards.

Repeat 10 to 15 times. Do this exercise 3 times a day.

Do not let your shoulder drop forward. Always move within pain tolerances, and do not push through the pain.

You can progress by holding a light weight in your hand if you feel able to.

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Postural exercises



- A.** Stand with your feet comfortably apart. Gently lift your head. Imagine a string pulling you tall from the centre of your scalp.
- B.** Gently lift your chest. Feel yourself being pulled wide through your collarbones.
- C.** Gently lift your head backwards.

Your body should be nicely stacked: head on top of shoulders, over pelvis, over knees, over ankles. If you lean against a wall, your bottom, upper back, and head should be touching the wall, with a slight pull at the back of your head. The line in the diagram shows how your body should align.

Basic core strength exercise

Your core muscles are the muscles around your abdomen. They support your spine and pelvis. Strong core muscles are important for maintaining good posture.

Patient Information



A. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Rest your hands lightly on your tummy.

B. Contract your pelvic floor muscles. You can do this by imagining you're stopping yourself from peeing.

C. Pull your belly button in. Hold this for 10 seconds.

Repeat 10 times.

You may find it difficult to breathe while you hold the contraction to begin with. This should get easier with practice.

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