

Shoulder pain and stiffness

Information and advice

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This information is designed to supplement the advice given by your doctor, and is written by physiotherapists based on the latest medical advice.

Shoulder pain and stiffness can have many causes. The following advice and exercises are aimed at helping you to manage your shoulder problem.

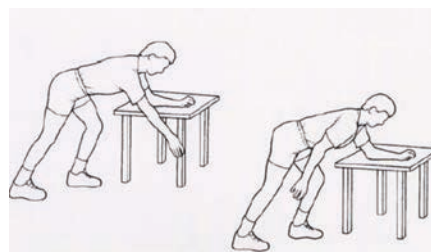
Here are some things you can do to help to decrease your shoulder pain:

- Take pain relief regularly rather than waiting until you need it. It works much more effectively this way. If you need assistance with medication then discuss this with your GP or pharmacist.
- You may find a hot water bottle or heat pack beneficial. Wrap the bottle in a towel and place on the painful region. Leave in place for about 15 minutes. It is often helpful to apply the heat before exercising. Do not use if you have any impairment of your skin sensation.
- Wrap a bag of frozen peas or gel ice pack in a damp towel and place on the painful region for about 20 minutes. Do not use if you have any impairment of your skin sensation.
- It can help to use a pillow to support your arm when you are sitting and sleeping.
- You may find it helpful to modify your activities until the pain settles by avoiding aggravating activities or positions.

Shoulder exercises

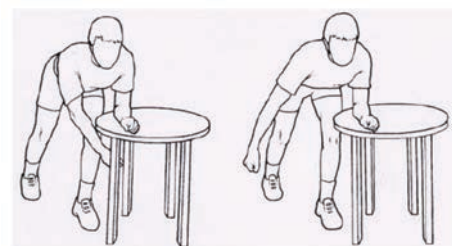
1. Lean on a table with unaffected hand. Let your affected arm hang straight down. Swing your arm forwards and backwards. Try to let the weight of your arm do some of the work.

Repeat 10 times



2. Now lean with your feet apart sideways. Let your arm swing from side to side in front of your body.

Repeat 10 times



3. Lying on your back, hold a stick in both hands and rest it on your stomach. Lift your arms straight up and over your head to the floor (or as far as possible).

Hold for 10 seconds (breathing normally), then return to starting position.

Repeat 10 times.



4. Sitting with your elbow bent and in to your side, use your other hand to gently resist your hand/forearm, moving:

(a) inward and

(b) outward

Hold each resistance for five seconds.

Repeat 10 times each.



5. Stand facing a wall. 'Walk' your fingers up the wall as high as possible. Reverse down the same way.

Repeat 10 times.



6. Stand or sit.

With your good arm place a rolled up towel behind your head and down your back. Get hold of the towel behind your lower back with your arm to be exercised. Pull upwards, bringing the lower arm up as far as possible.

Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat 10 times



7. Shrug your shoulders up, back and around, then relax.

Repeat five times.



Start off initially with exercises one to three and try to do the exercises two to three times a day. Start off doing two or three of each, gradually building the repetitions up to the number stated and slowly increase the movement. It is normal to get some discomfort for a day or so after doing new exercises. Introduce exercises four to seven as your pain allows.

If you feel the exercises are making your pain worse, reduce the number or frequency of the exercises or stop and seek advice.



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