

Self Treatment of Shoulder Injuries

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Introduction

Following injury to your shoulder you may experience pain, swelling and some stiffness. This is expected and will improve with time. At this early stage it is important to keep the shoulder moving so that the shoulder does not become stiff. It is also very important to stop activities that make the shoulder more painful.

During the early stages after shoulder injury the main objectives of management include;

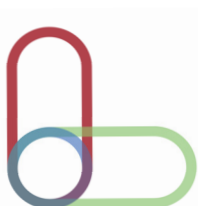
- Maintaining the range of movement in the shoulder, elbow and hand. If you stop moving the arm it will begin to stiffen and the injury may be made worse.
- Decrease aggravating factors, such as strenuous activities involving powerful movements i.e. racket sports, swimming. If these activities are not stopped and the aggravating factors to the shoulder not minimised the injury can be made worse. This in turn will delay the healing process.

Early Stage Exercises

Pendular exercise

Stand with the good arm leaning on a table for support. Let your other arm relax and hang down towards the floor. Swing your arm slowly round in a circle. Repeat this 10 times, then change direction and repeat a further 10 times.

Repeat this pendular exercise 3-4 times a day.



Stick exercises

Lie on your back and holding a stick or umbrella in both hands raise the stick above your head then lower back down again. Make sure your elbows stay straight throughout the whole movement. Repeat exercise 10 times.
Repeat this stick exercise 3 times a day.



Shoulder rotation

This exercise can be done standing or sitting. Roll your shoulders in circles backwards and then forwards. Repeat exercise 10 times in each direction.
Repeat this shoulder rotation 3 times a day.



Hand pumping and elbow bends

To help reduce swelling make a tight fist with your hand then straighten your fingers completely. Repeat exercise 10 times.
Using a table for support, bend your elbow as much as possible then straighten. Repeat exercise 10 times.

Repeat the hand pumping and elbow bends 3 times a day.

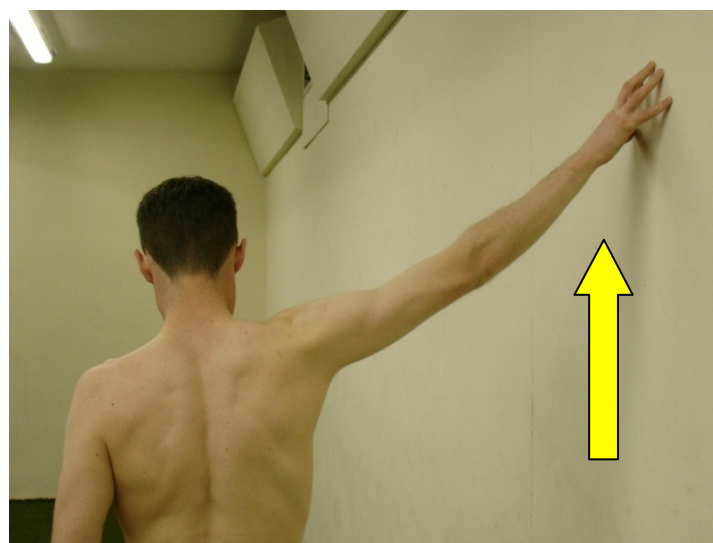
Hand climbing up the wall

Stand facing the wall and try to walk your fingers up the wall as far as possible. When you reach as far as you can walk your fingers back down the same way. Repeat this exercise 10 times. Repeat hand climbing up the wall 3 times a day.



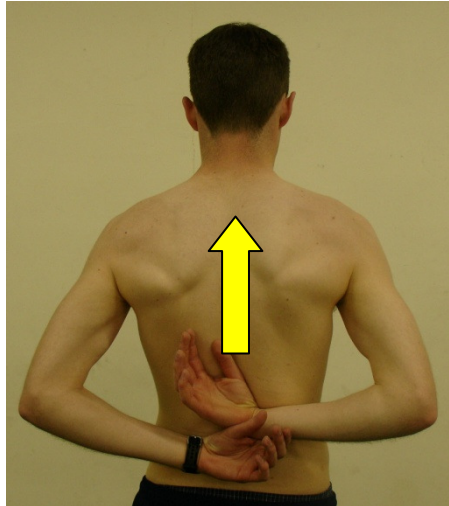
Hand climbing to the side

With your side facing the wall, walk your fingers up the wall as far as possible. Then walk your fingers back down the same way. Repeat exercise 10 times. Repeat hand climbing to the side 3 times a day.



Hand behind back

Stand with both arms behind your back. Grasp the injured arm with your good arm then slowly slide your arms up your back. Repeat exercise 10 times.
Repeat hand behind back 3 times a day.



Standing door stretches

Facing the door frame place the palm of your affected arm against the door frame so that it doesn't move during the exercise. Your elbow should be bent and kept by your side throughout the whole movement. Turn sideways away from the door so that your body rotates away from the frame and you feel a stretch on the inside of your shoulder. Repeat exercise 10 times.
Repeat standing door stretches 3 times a day.



Stretching exercises during the early stages are extremely important. Full range of movement of the shoulder needs to be maintained!!!

Advanced Stage Exercises

Once range of movement in the injured shoulder is attained and the pain has settled, you can move to advanced stage exercises.

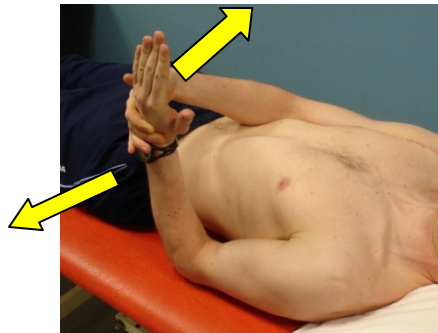
During the advanced stage of rehabilitation the main objectives are;

- Maintain range of movement of the shoulder
- Increase strength of the muscles around the shoulder which in turn will help stabilise the shoulder.

Exercise 1

Lying on your back, bend your elbow keeping it by your side throughout the exercise. Hold the outside of your affected wrist with your good hand and attempt to move your injured arm outwards. Resist this movement with your good hand. Hold for 5 seconds then relax. Repeat exercise 5 times.

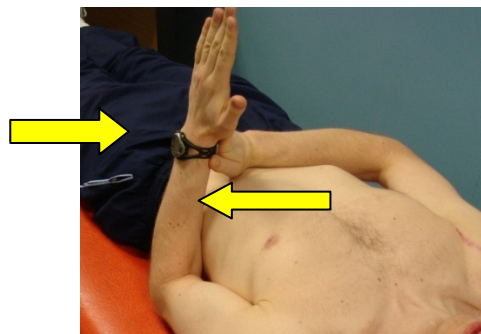
Do **exercise 1** three times a day.



Exercise 2

In the same position as exercise 1, hold the injured arm on the inside of the wrist. This time try and pull your arm towards you body, resisting it with your good hand. Hold for 5 seconds then relax. Repeat exercise 5 times.

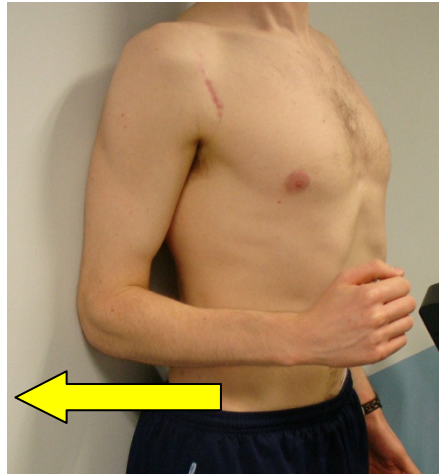
Do **exercise 2** three times a day.



Exercise 3

In standing, bend your elbow and keep it fixed against your side. Try to press your upper arm backwards into the wall. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat exercise 5 times.

Do **exercise 3** three times a day.



Frequently Asked Questions

How long will it take before I can return to my previous activities?

If the activities involve excessive or strenuous movement or if any of the movements cause an increase in your symptoms it is best to avoid them until your shoulder has regained full range of movement, feels strong and is pain free. If activities are resumed before proper healing has occurred further damage is possible.

Make sure both the early and advanced exercises can be completed with ease prior to progressing to strenuous activities.

How can I prevent further injury to my shoulder?

In order not to re-injure your shoulder you should work slowly and steadily through the exercises, from early to advanced. It is important not to overload the shoulder too quickly. It is also important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and include the shoulder exercises for a minimum of 6 months following your injury. Good posture is also important.