

The Painful Shoulder

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
Glasgow Royal Infirmary & Stobhill Ambulatory Care Hospital

Shoulder pain is very common, the majority gets better with Physiotherapy exercises and pain medication and after a period of time

There are many reasons for shoulder pain, changes in activity levels, where muscles and tendons are overused or underused, getting a little older or injury. Tendons attach the muscles to bone, and it is often the changes to the tendon that cause it to be painful or inflamed.

The Pain is often felt at the front and side of the shoulder and worsened with movements e.g. lifting your arm overhead, twisting and turning movements and lifting. The pain can disturb your sleep.

The shoulder is a mobile joint you should keep the shoulder moving as much as you can. You should avoid movements or activities that produce pain.

It can take 6 to 12 weeks to notice improvement. It is normal to feel pain after exercise, however this should ease soon after you stop the exercise.

Regular pain killers prescribed by your GP is useful when your shoulder becomes painful and sore.

Keeping active with regular exercise, e.g. walking is important.

More resources (from the British Elbow and Shoulder Society [BESS]) can be found online at:

www.bess.org.uk

<https://bit.ly/shoulder-videos>

<https://www.bess.org.uk/application/files/5315/2723/2907/PublicationA5version-Amended.pdf>



Shoulder Exercises

These are exercises advised by your Physiotherapist or Doctor for your shoulder. They are intended to be used when your shoulder is painful and stiff. You should aim to do them 2 to 3 times per day. A small increase in pain while exercising that last a short time is okay.

Exercise One – Table Top Step Back

- Keep hands still on a work surface and gradually step back, keeping arms straight
- Repeat up to 10 times



Exercise Two – Table Top Forward Slide (Progression of Exercise One)

- Place both hands on a towel and slide the towel forward, stretching the arms forward
- Repeat up to 10 times



Exercise Three: Arm Lift

- Lying on your back, using the unaffected arm, support and lift the affected arm overhead as far as able
- Repeat up to 10 times



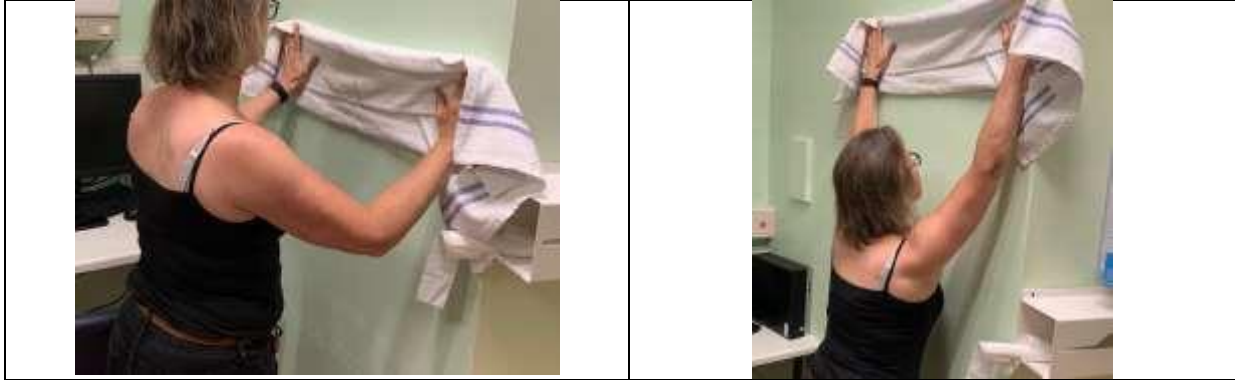
Exercise Four: Rotation

- Sitting, with affected arm resting on a table, using a stick, keep the elbow loosely into the side, rotate the forearm out to the side, avoid the upper arm moving too much
- Repeat up to 10 times, rest and repeat the set (10 repetitions) a further time



Exercise Four: Wall Slides

- Standing, using a towel, slide the forearms up the wall overhead. Do not go through pain, suggest to do this exercise once you are able to safely do the bench slide
- Repeat up to 10 times, rest and repeat the set



Exercise Five

- Sitting with painful arm supported on a table with arm slightly away from your body. Make a fist. Place other hand onto outside of forearm and push forearm into your hand and hold for 10-15 seconds without letting any movement occur.
- Apply half your maximum pressure possible
- Repeat 4 to 6 times, repeat this as able

