

Exercises for Shoulder Disorders

General Instructions:

Exercise is an important part of treatment to relieve stiffness and discomfort in your shoulder area. Exercises help you regain normal use of your shoulders and relieve pain associated with motion.

Follow the rehabilitative exercise routine prescribed by your doctor. In general, exercises are more effective when performed after a shower or following application of hot, moist towels. Moist heat relieves pain by increasing blood flow to the muscles of your shoulders.

Gradually increase the number of times you repeat each exercise as your condition improves. As your pain tolerance increases, you will be able to increase the intensity and duration of these exercises. They should be repeated two or three times a day to help relax and relieve tension of the shoulder muscles. Be sure to stop when fatigued. Take an exercise break during your work day!

Additional Instructions:

SEE BACK OF THIS PAGE FOR RECOMMENDED EXERCISES.

Helpful Hints for Healthy Shoulders

Standing and Sitting



Incorrect

Correct

While standing or sitting, keep neck drawn back, shoulders down, and chin tucked in, not up.

A proper chair will support your arms and shoulders and help prevent strains of the neck and shoulders.

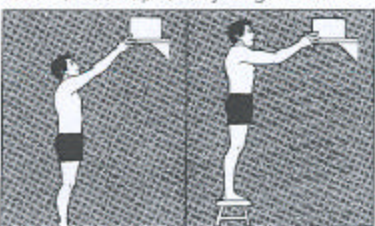


Incorrect

Correct

Reaching

Don't reach for a shelf higher than your head. Stand on a stool. Don't reach or look up for any length of time.



Incorrect

Correct

Driving

Don't drive with the seat too far back or too low. If necessary, sit on a pillow or use a seat support such as Sacro-Ease® to avoid stretching up and forward over the steering wheel.

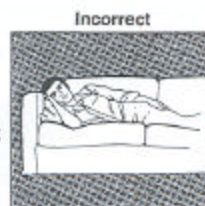


Incorrect

Correct

Resting and Sleeping

Don't lie on the sofa to watch TV; sit up properly. Don't prop your head up or forward on high pillows while reading or watching TV.

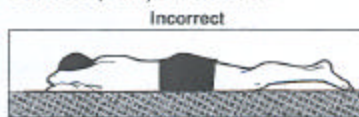


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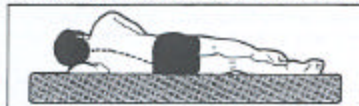


Correct

Don't sleep on your stomach.

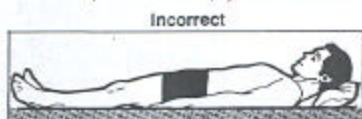


Incorrect



Correct

Lie on your side and adjust your pillow to maintain your head and shoulders in a neutral position. Keep your arms down.



Incorrect



Correct

If you sleep on your back, put a pillow under your neck, not your head.

Use a bed board or a firm orthopedic mattress. A proper pillow is 3-4 inches thick, 6-7 inches wide, 16 inches long. If you have a shoulder problem, try an inexpensive contoured pillow. Don't sleep in a chair.

Exercises:

1. Pendulum Exercise

Do this exercise for approximately three minutes, two or three times a day. Your arm should swing free like a pendulum during these exercises. *Avoid over-using the affected shoulder.*



- Lean forward and hold onto a table with the hand on the side of the unaffected shoulder. Hold a one- to two-pound weight in the hand on the affected side. Let your arm hang loosely with your shoulder relaxed. Swing arm forward and backward, keeping your elbow completely straight. Do not flex elbow.
- Next, swing your arm laterally across your body, to the right and left. Keep your elbow straight.
- Now begin to make circles with your arm. Begin with small circles and gradually increase the size of the circles.

2. Wall-Climbing Exercise

These exercises should be performed for a total of approximately 15 minutes and repeated two or three times a day.

- Stand sidewise with your affected side to the wall. Keeping your elbow straight, walk your fingers up the wall and make a mark. Repeat this exercise ten times, trying to exceed your previous mark each time.

- Face the wall and repeat this same procedure.



3. General Exercises:

- Stand erect. Raise your arms over your head and stretch them as far as possible, keeping your elbows straight. Repeat and try to exceed the previous limit each time.

- Stand erect with your hands at your sides. Raise your arms laterally away from your sides. Bring them over your head and then clap your hands together, keeping your elbows straight. Repeat this exercise bringing the backs of your hands together.

- Stand erect. Lock your hands behind your neck. Pull your elbows backward and throw chest outward as you extend your shoulders backward.

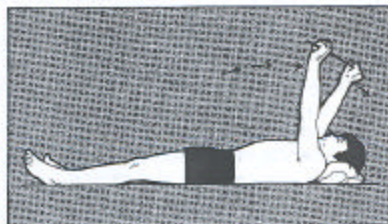
- Lie on your stomach on a firm surface. Place both hands at the back of neck. Raise your head and both elbows up from this surface. Do not raise your chest or the rest of your body.

- Stand erect. Place the back of the hand of the affected side on your lower back. Gradually try to raise or crawl the hand up the back toward the opposite shoulder. If only one shoulder is affected, try to reach the same point on your back with the affected shoulder as you could with the normal shoulder. If both shoulders are involved, repeat this exercise with the opposite hand.



- Stand erect. With the back of the hand held flatly across the back, grasp a towel thrown over the opposite shoulder and held with the good hand. Pull down on the towel with your good arm as your pain tolerance in the affected shoulder permits.

- Take a small stick or baton two feet long. Lie on your back and grasp the baton with both hands. Swing hands overhead, using the good arm to force the affected arm backward. Repeat this exercise ten times.



- Stand erect. Cross your wrists in front of your body letting your arms hang freely. Move your arms upward. Stretch arms backward and then return them to the starting position.

