



## West Berkshire Physiotherapy Service Leaflet 5 Shoulder Pain and Stiffness

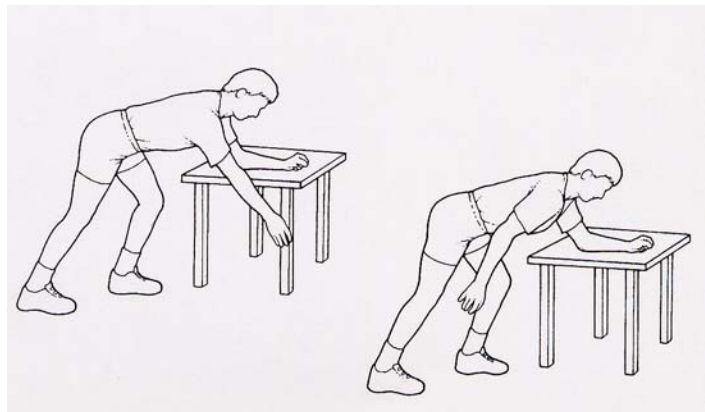
Shoulder pain and stiffness can have many causes. The following advice and exercises are aimed at helping you to manage your shoulder problem.

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

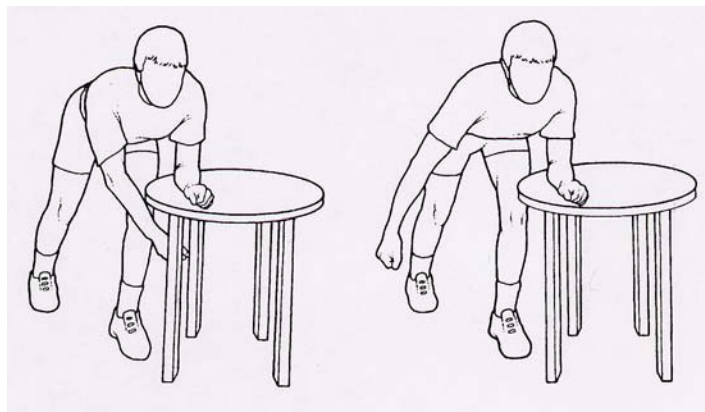
- Take pain relief **regularly** rather than waiting until you need it. It works much more effectively this way. If you need assistance with medication then discuss this with your GP or pharmacist.
- Heat. You may find a hot water bottle or heat pack beneficial. Wrap the bottle in a towel and place on the painful region. Leave in place for about 15 minutes. It is often helpful to apply the heat before exercising.
- Ice. Wrap a bag of frozen peas or gel ice pack in a damp towel and place on the painful region for about 20 minutes. Leave off for 10 minutes before reapplying.
- Positioning. 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. Stand, leaning 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

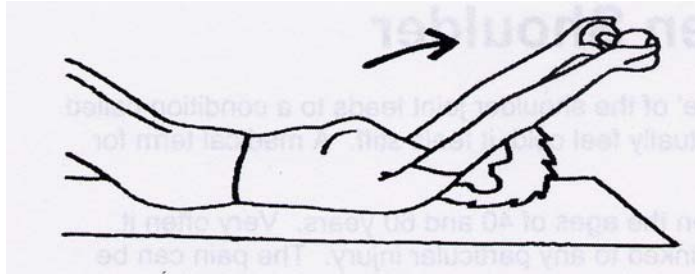


2. Now stand with your feet apart sideways. Let your arm swing from side to side in front of your body.  
Repeat 10 times



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3. Lying on your back with knees bent. 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 approximately 10 seconds (breathe normally), then return to starting position. Repeat 10 times



### 4. Isometric Exercises

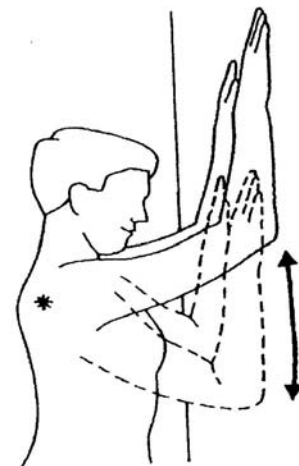
Sitting with your elbow bent, use your other hand to gently resist movement in 4 directions, one at a time. Resist upwards movement and downwards movement. Then, keeping your elbow in to your side, resist inward and outward movement of your forearm.

Hold each resistance for the count of 5.  
Repeat 10 times.



### 5. Stand facing a wall.

'Walk' your fingers up the wall as high as possible.  
Reverse down the same way.  
Repeat 10 times.

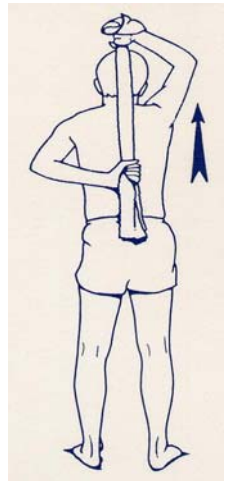


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6. Stand or sit.

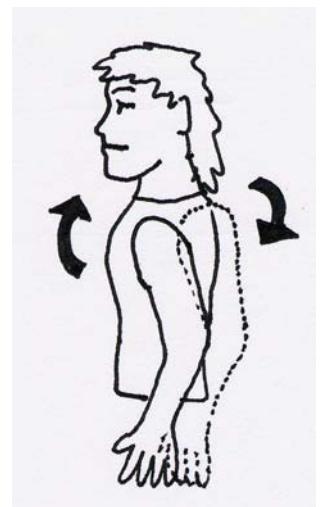
With one arm bring a string/towel over your shoulder, behind your back. Get hold of the towel with the arm to be exercised. Pull upwards, bringing the lower arm up as far as possible. Hold approximately 10 seconds.

Repeat 10 times



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

Repeat 10 times.



Try to do the exercises 2-3 times a day and start off doing 2 or 3 of each. Gradually build up the number you do (up to 10) and slowly increase the movement. It is normal to get some discomfort for a day or so after doing new exercises.

Improvement may be slow, but do not worry, as long as it is not getting worse. If your pain is continuing to worsen over a period of 3 or 4 days of doing the exercises, then stop and go back to your GP.



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