

Shoulder Rehabilitation Guidelines

The shoulder complex is regarded as one of the most mobile structures in the body – it is made up of several joints that combine with tendons and muscles (most importantly the rotator cuff) to allow a large range of motion in the arm. Due to its mobility, the shoulder complex is susceptible to pain and disability resulting from instability, impingement and structural damage. Often heavy lifting and overhead activities may contribute towards and aggravate shoulder pain. As a result, effective rehabilitation should involve a combination of strength, stability and coordination exercises to achieve a return to optimal function.

The guidelines and exercises described below are some of the more basic and effective strategies utilised to restore normal shoulder function following many common pathologies – your physiotherapist will discuss with you any specific adaptations, progressions and precautions tailored to your individual presentation. Any acute injury should be assessed by your physiotherapist prior to starting a rehabilitation program.

Early Phase Rehabilitation

- Active Assisted Range of Motion
 - Use your unaffected arm to gently assist your injured shoulder overhead before slowly returning to a resting position
 - Do not push into pain – only go to the point where you feel a comfortable stretch
 - Alternatively this exercise may be performed using a shoulder pulley – your therapist will discuss if this is appropriate for you

- Shoulder Pulley
 - Set up pulley as instructed by your physiotherapist
 - Sit on a chair underneath the pulley
 - Holding on to each handle, using your pain free arm pull down on the handle so that your painful arm lifts up
 - Pull until you start to feel a discomforting stretch – hold it at this point for 10-20 sec, then return to starting position
 - **Do not push into pain**
 - ** if handles are too long, pull cord through the hole and tie a knot further up the string

- Towel Squeeze
 - Roll up a towel and hold into side using tucked arm
 - Gently compress towel by tucking elbow into your side
 - Hold for 3 seconds and relax





➤ Isometric External Rotation

- Tuck elbow by side and bend arm to 90 degrees
- Use good arm to gently resist rotation of affected arm outwards
- Hold for 3 seconds and relax
- Do not push into pain – only go to the point of comfortable muscle activation

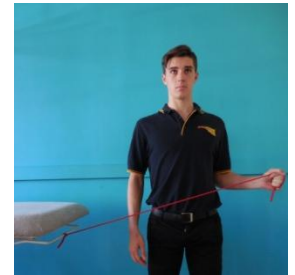
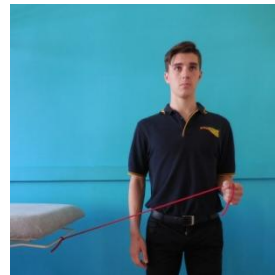


➤ Pectoral Stretch

- Stand tall in a split stance with your forearm against a wall and elbow bent to 90 degrees (stop sign position)
- Gently rotate your body away from the wall until you feel a stretch through the front of your chest
- Do not push into pain – only go to the point of comfortable stretch
- Hold stretch for 30 seconds

➤ Theraband External Rotation

- Tuck elbow by side and bend arm to 90 degrees
- Set shoulder blades back and down
- Gently rotate arm outwards while holding theraband, maintaining a strong wrist and stable elbow position
- **Do not push into pain**



➤ Straight Arm Pulses

- Hold dumbbells or equivalent weight at 45 degrees with straight arms
- Squeeze shoulder blades back and down
- Slowly elevate and lower arms just below shoulder height while maintaining shoulder blade position



➤ Scapular Stability

- Stand with back against a wall and feet slightly forward
- Turn palms outwards and squeeze shoulder blades back and down
- Slowly press arms overhead while maintaining shoulder blade position



Tailor Made

Physiotherapy

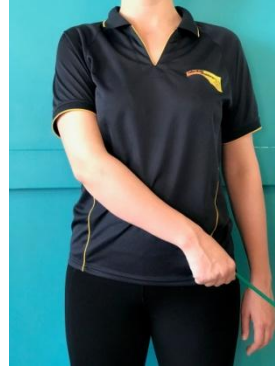
Pty Ltd



9481 9856

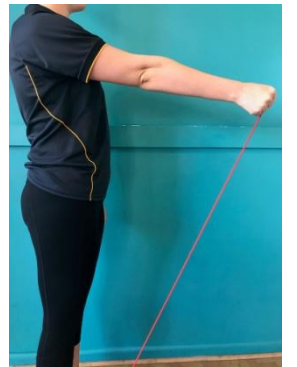
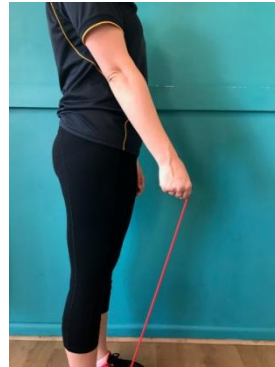
➤ Draw the Sword

- Starting with one hand at the opposite hip
- Set shoulder blades back and down
- Pull out and up across your body so your arm ends up at a 45 angle to your body
- Slowly return to starting position
- **Do not pull into pain**



➤ Theraband Forward Flexion

- Starting with arm by your side, keep shoulders back and down
- Pull arm up in front of your body, keeping elbow straight
- Don't hitch your shoulder
- Then return to starting position
- **Do not pull into pain**



➤ External Rotation at 90 degrees

- Start with arm at 90 degrees
- Set shoulder blades back and down
- Rotate forearm backwards, keeping elbow in the same position
- **Do not pull into pain**



➤ Scapular circles

- Set shoulder blades back and down
- Bring theraband around so that your arm is straight in front of your body – like your telling someone to stop.
- From this position make small circles with your arm, keeping shoulder blades steady
- Do not move shoulder blades
- **Do not push into pain**