



‘Happy healthy shoulders’

General Anatomy

The shoulder complex is a highly mobile joint that relies on the well coordinated balance of 27 muscles for optimal performance.

Causes of shoulder pain

Internal factors:

- › Muscle imbalance or weakness; increased muscle tension; muscle fatigue; poor nerve conduction to the muscles; fractures to bones of the arm; poor posture and biomechanics (transferring, wheeling, lifting, carrying, etc).

External factors:

- › Poor wheelchair set up; improper walking aid use; harmful handling by others; stress, reduced sleep.

Typical Symptoms:

- › Strong, deep, dull ache in the front of the shoulder at rest, sharp with movement. Pain can sometimes travel down the arm towards the elbow, but seldomly passes it.
- › Pain increases when reaching your arm at or above shoulder height or out to the side.

Treatment:

- › Early treatment and intervention can prevent years of ongoing impact and damage. It's never too late to seek help for an effected shoulder.
- › A thorough physical assessment by your doctor, physiotherapist, and/or occupational therapist.
- › A functional and ergonomic assessment.
- › Pain recovery approach.
- › Exercise to re-establish balance and function to your shoulders.
- › Functional adjustments to correct any other factors of your daily routine which may impact your shoulder health (transfer practice, updating wheelchair, changing walking device).
- › Treatment should be individualised and tailored to your specific needs.

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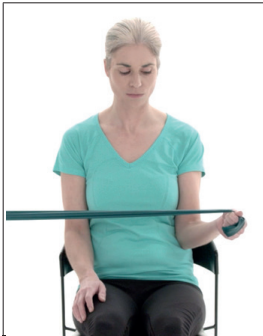
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General shoulder exercises:

Begin with 6-8 repetitions x 2 sets then progress to 10-12 repetitions x 3-4 sets as able. Perform exercises daily. Exercise should be nearly pain free.



External rotation:

DIFFICULT

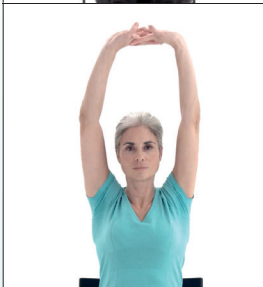
Position yourself sitting side-on to a resistance exercise band, which should be at the level of your bent elbow. Grasp the band so that it crosses your torso. Firmly tuck your elbow into your side and start to rotate your arm away from you, pivoting on your tucked in elbow. Once at the end of range, slowly return to the start position counting down from 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times.



Shoulder arch:

MODERATE

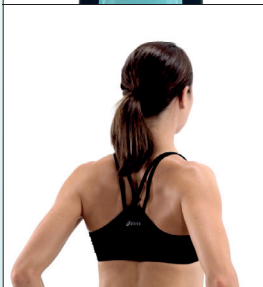
Sitting in a comfortable position, begin with your arms fully stretched out at your side and palms facing outwards. Slowly raise your arms up by your side, aiming for your palms to touch overhead and keeping your arms in peripheral sight throughout. Squeeze your biceps into your ears if possible. Perform slowly and with maximum control.



Active-assisted arm raises:

MODERATE

Position yourself comfortably in sitting and interlock your fingers together. Use the combined strength of both your arms to reach up overhead as high as possible. Use the stronger arm to assist the effected arm as much as needed.



Scapular retraction:

EASY

In an upright sitting position, pull your shoulder blades together and downwards. Watch that you are not just pulling your elbows back. Hold for 2 deep breaths.

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