



Rotator Cuff and Shoulder Conditioning Program

Purpose of Program

After an injury or surgery, an exercise or conditioning program will help you return to daily activities and enjoy a more active, healthy lifestyle. It will also help you return to sports and other recreational activities.

This is a general conditioning program that provides a wide range of exercises. To ensure that the program is safe and effective for you, it should be performed under your doctor's supervision.

This program should be continued for 4 to 6 weeks, unless otherwise specified by your doctor or physical therapist. After your recovery, these exercises can be continued as a maintenance program for lifelong protection and health of your shoulders. Performing the exercises 2 to 3 days a week will maintain strength and range of motion in your shoulders.

Strength

Strengthening the muscles that support your shoulder will help keep your shoulder joint stable. Keeping these muscles strong can relieve shoulder pain and prevent further injury.

Flexibility

Stretching the muscles that you strengthen is important for restoring range of motion and preventing injury. Gently stretching after these exercises helps reduce muscle soreness and keeps your muscles long and flexible.

Getting Started

Warm up: Before doing the following exercises, warm up with 5 to 10 minutes of low impact activity, like walking or riding a stationary bicycle.

Stretch: After warming up, do the stretching exercises on Page 2 before moving on to the strengthening exercises. After completing the strengthening exercises, repeat the stretching exercises to finish.

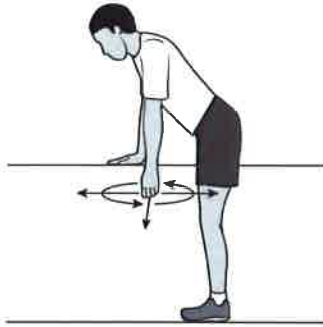
Do not ignore pain: You should not feel pain during an exercise. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist if you have any pain while exercising.

Ask questions: If you are not sure how to do an exercise or how often to do it, contact your doctor or physical therapist.



STRETCHING EXERCISES

1. Pendulum



Repetitions: 2 sets of 10 repetitions
Days per week: 5 to 6
Equipment needed: None
Main muscles worked: Deltoids, supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis

Step-by-step directions:

- Lean forward and place one hand on a counter or table for support. Let your other arm hang freely at your side.
- Gently swing your arm forward and back. Repeat the exercise moving your arm side-to-side, and repeat again in a circular motion.
- Repeat the entire sequence with the other arm.

TIP: Do not round your back or lock your knees.

2. Crossover Arm Stretch



Repetitions: 4 on each side
Days per week: 5 to 6
Equipment needed: None
Main muscles worked: Posterior deltoid
You should feel this stretch at the back of your shoulder.

Step-by-step directions:

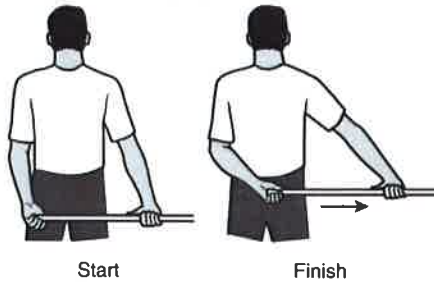
- Relax your shoulders and gently pull one arm across your chest as far as possible, holding your upper arm.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat with the other arm.

TIP: Do not pull or put pressure on your elbow.



STRETCHING EXERCISES CONTINUED

3. *Passive Internal Rotation*



Repetitions: 4 on each side

Days per week: 5 to 6

Equipment needed: Light stick, such as a yardstick

Main muscles worked: Subscapularis

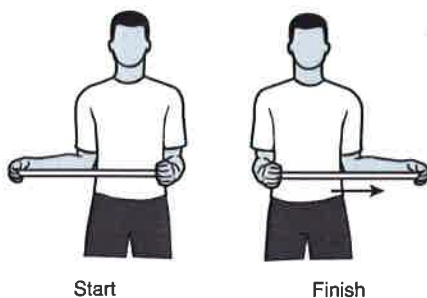
You should feel this stretch at the front of your shoulder.

Step-by-step directions:

- Hold a stick behind your back with one hand, and lightly grasp the other end of the stick with your other hand.
- Pull the stick horizontally as shown so that your shoulder is passively stretched to the point of feeling a pull without pain.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.

TIP: Do not lean over or twist to the side while pulling the stick.

4. *Passive External Rotation*



Repetitions: 4 on each side

Days per week: 5 to 6

Equipment needed: Light stick, such as a yardstick

Main muscles worked: Infraspinatus, teres minor

You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder.

Step-by-step directions:

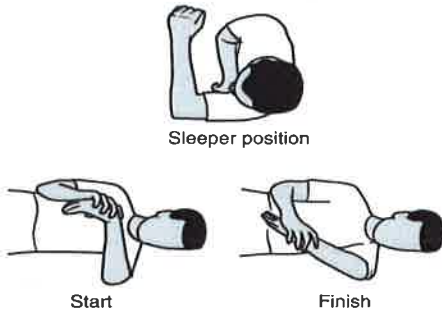
- Grasp the stick with one hand and cup the other end of the stick with the other hand.
- Keep the elbow of the shoulder you are stretching against the side of your body and push the stick horizontally as shown to the point of feeling a pull without pain.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.

TIP: Keep your hips facing forward and do not twist.



STRETCHING EXERCISES CONTINUED

5. Sleeper Stretch



Repetitions: 4 repetitions, 3x a day

Days per week: Daily

Equipment needed: None

Main muscles worked: Infraspinatus, teres minor
You should feel this stretch in your outer upper back, behind your shoulder.

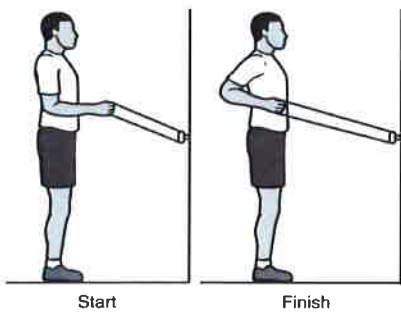
Step-by-step directions:

- Lie on your side on a firm, flat surface with the affected shoulder under you and your arm bent, as shown. You can place your head on a pillow for comfort, if needed.
- Use your unaffected arm to push your other arm down. Stop pressing down when you feel a stretch in the back of your affected shoulder.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds, and then relax your arm for 30 seconds.

TIP: Do not bend your wrist or press down on your wrist.

STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

6. Standing Row



Repetitions: 3 sets of 8 repetitions; progress to 3 sets of 12 as this exercise becomes easier

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can be performed on a weight machine.

Main muscles worked: Middle and lower trapezius

You should feel this exercise at the back of your shoulder and into your upper back.

Step-by-step directions:

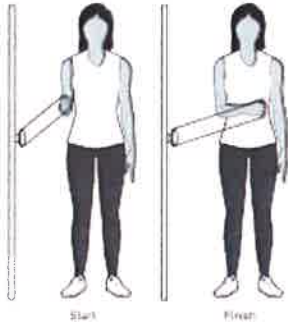
- Make a 3-foot-long loop with the elastic band and tie the ends together. Attach the loop to a doorknob or other stable object.
- Stand holding the band with your elbow bent and at your side, as shown in the start position.
- Keep your arm close to your side and slowly pull your elbow straight back.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

TIP: Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you pull.



STRENGTHENING EXERCISES CONTINUED

7. *Internal Rotation*



Repetitions: 3 sets of 8 repetitions; progress to 3 sets of 12 as this exercise becomes easier to perform

Days of week: 3

Equipment needed: Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can also be performed on a weight machine.

Main muscles worked: Pectoralis, subscapularis

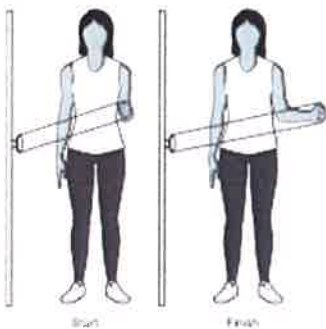
You should feel this exercise at your chest and shoulder.

Step-by-step directions:

- Make a 3-foot-long loop with the elastic band and tie the ends together. Attach the loop to a door knob or other stable object.
- Stand holding the band with your elbow bent and at your side, as shown in the start position.
- Keep your elbow close to your side and bring your arm across your body.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

TIP: Keep your elbow pressed into your side.

8. *External Rotation*



Repetitions: 3 sets of 8 repetitions; progress to 3 sets of 12 as the exercise becomes easier to perform

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can be performed on a weight machine.

Main muscles worked: Infraspinatus, teres minor, posterior deltoid

You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder and upper back.

Step-by-step directions:

- Make a 3-foot-long loop with the elastic band and tie the ends together. Attach the loop to a doorknob or other stable object.
- Stand holding the band with your elbow bent and at your side, as shown in the start position.
- Keeping your elbow close to your side, slowly rotate your arm outward.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

TIP: Squeeze your shoulder blades together when you pull your elbow back.



STRENGTHENING EXERCISES CONTINUED

9. Elbow Flexion



Repetitions: 3 sets of 8 repetitions

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: Begin with a weight with which you can complete 3 sets of 8 and progress to 3 sets of 12. As the exercise becomes easier, add weight in 1-pound increments to a maximum of 5 pounds. Each time you increase the weight, start again at 3 sets of 8 and work up to 3 sets of 12.

Main muscles worked: Biceps

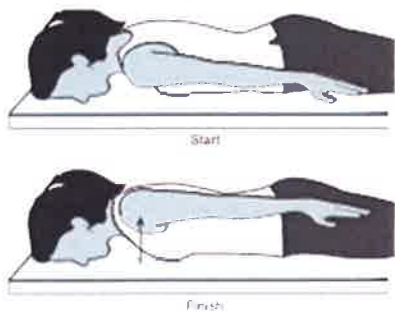
You should feel this exercise at the front of your upper arm.

Step-by-step directions:

- Stand tall with your weight evenly distributed over both feet.
- Keep your elbow close to your side and slowly bring the weight up toward your shoulder as shown.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Slowly return to the starting position and repeat.

TIP: Do not do the exercise too quickly or swing your arm.

10. Scapula Setting



Repetitions: 10 repetitions

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: None

Main muscles worked: Middle trapezius, serratus

You should feel this exercise in your upper back, at your shoulder blade.

Step-by-step directions:

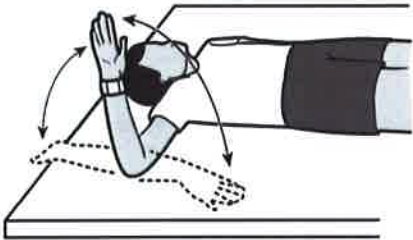
- Lie on your stomach with your arms by your sides. Place a pillow under your forehead for comfort, if required.
- Gently draw your shoulder blades together and down your back as far as possible.
- Ease about halfway off from this position and hold for 10 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

TIP: Do not tense up in your neck.



STRENGTHENING EXERCISES CONTINUED

11. Internal and External Rotation



Repetitions: 3-4 sets of 20 repetitions

Days per week: 3 to 5

Equipment needed: Begin with a weight that allows 3-4 sets of 20. As the exercise becomes easier, add 2-3 pounds of weight, but do fewer repetitions. Progress to 3 sets of 15 without exceeding a weight of 5-7 pounds.

Main muscles worked: *Internal rotation:* anterior deltoid, pectoralis, subscapularis, latissimus; *External rotation:* posterior deltoid, infraspinatus, teres minor

You should feel this exercise in the front and back of your shoulder, chest and upper back.

Step-by-step directions:

- Lie on your back on a flat surface.
- Extend your arm straight out from the shoulder and bend the elbow 90° so that your fingers are pointed up.
- Keeping your elbow bent and on the floor, slowly move your arm in the arc shown. Bring your elbow down to a 45° angle if you experience pain at 90°.

TIP: Use a weight that makes the last few repetitions difficult, but pain-free.

12. External Rotation



Repetitions: 2 sets of 10 repetitions

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: Begin with a weight that allows 2 sets of 8-10 repetitions and progress to 3 sets of 5 repetitions. As the exercise becomes easier, add weight in 1-pound increments to a maximum of 5 pounds. Each time you increase the weight, start again at 2 sets of 8-10.

Main muscles worked: Infraspinatus, teres minor, posterior deltoid
You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder and upper back.

Step-by-step directions:

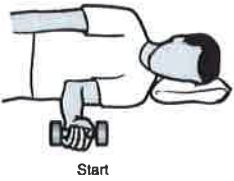
- Lie on your side on a firm, flat surface with your unaffected arm under you, cradling your head.
- Hold your injured arm against your side as shown, with your elbow bent at a 90° angle.
- Keep your elbow against your side and slowly rotate your arm at the shoulder, raising the weight to a vertical position.
- Slowly lower the weight to the starting position to a count of 5.

TIP: Do not let your body roll back as you raise the weight.



STRENGTHENING EXERCISES CONTINUED

13. Internal Rotation



Repetitions: 2 sets of 10 repetitions

Days per week: 3

Equipment needed: Begin with a weight that allows 2 sets of 8-10 repetitions and progress to 3 sets of 5 repetitions. As the exercise becomes easier, add weight in 1-pound increments to a maximum of 5 pounds. Each time you increase the weight, start again at 2 sets of 8-10.

Main muscles worked: Subscapularis, teres major

You should feel this stretch in the front of your shoulder.

Step-by-step directions:

- Lie on a firm, flat surface on the side of your affected arm. Place a pillow or folded cloth under your head to keep your spine straight.
- Hold your injured arm against your side as shown, with your elbow bent at a 90° angle.
- Keep your elbow bent and against your body and slowly rotate your arm at the shoulder, raising the weight to a vertical position.
- Slowly lower the weight to the starting position.

TIP: Do not let your body roll back as you raise the weight.