

Exercises for Chronic Shoulder Pain

This strengthening and stretching program will help lessen your pain, and get you stronger and more flexible, so you can do the activities you enjoy with less pain and effort. Choose a time of day that best fits your daily routine. Please talk with your primary care provider or physical therapist if you have questions or concerns.

Strengthening

1. Prone shoulder lifts (3 positions)

- a. Lie face down on a bed or mat on the floor.
- b. Place a pillow under your hips.
- c. Place a towel under your forehead.
- d. Place your hands at your side.
- e. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and lift your arms.
- f. Repeat in each of the 3 positions
 1. Hands at hip level
 2. Hands at shoulder level (airplane)
 3. Hands above your shoulders (superman)



Tip

Lift your hands only 6 inches from the floor.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

2. Shoulder Scaption

- Sit or stand.
- Start with your arms at your sides.
- Keep your thumb toward the ceiling and your arm at 45 degrees to the side.
- Raise your arm to shoulder height.
- Go back to the starting position.
- Lift and lower slowly and in control.



Tips

- Use a weight or band for resistance.
- You can do 1 arm at a time or both arms at a time.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

3. Shoulder external rotation in side lying

- Lie on your side on a bed or a mat on the floor.
- Place a pillow under your head and a towel under your arm.
- Bend your elbow and lift your hand toward the ceiling.
- Go back to the starting position.



Tip

Start without a weight. Work toward using a lightweight hammer or hand weight.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

4. Wall push up

- a. Stand at a wall with your feet hip distance apart.
- b. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height and shoulder distance apart.
- c. Slowly bend your elbows and bring your chest closer to the wall.
- d. Slowly push away from the wall until your elbows are straight.



Tip

Be sure to keep your feet flat on the floor.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

Stretching

1. Upper back stretch

- a. Sit or stand.
- b. Lace your fingers together in front of you.
- c. Look down at your hands and reach toward the floor until a gentle stretch is felt in your upper back.
- d. Hold it, then go back to the starting position.



Tip

Lower your hands if the stretch is too hard.

Hold	Repetitions	Days per Week
30 seconds	3	Daily

2. Pectoral stretch (3 positions)

- a. Stand in a doorway and place your hands on each side of the doorway.
- b. For each of the 3 positions, take a small step forward into the doorway until a gentle stretch is felt in the front of your shoulder.
- c. Repeat in each of the 3 positions
 - a. Hands at hip level
 - b. Hands at shoulder level
 - c. Hands above your shoulders

Tip

Keep your back straight and tighten your abdominal muscles.

Hold	Repetitions	Days per Week
30 seconds	3	Daily

