

## Shoulder Injury Advice

Following injury, your shoulder may be swollen, bruised, and painful due to sprained muscles, tendons, and ligaments. In order to help the natural healing process, follow the advice below.

Things you should do	Things you should not do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest your arm for the first 2 days after your injury to prevent further swelling. You may have been provided with a sling to support the arm. If so, please use it.</li> <li>• Use ice packs (frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do) for 20 minutes every 2 hours if you can</li> <li>• Take the recommended medication to relieve the pain – this can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle.</li> <li>• Try to carry out normal activities as much as you are able to, but avoid activities such as contact sport.</li> <li>• Attend any appointments that have been made – e.g. physiotherapy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use ice packs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ over areas of skin that are in poor condition</li> <li>○ If you have poor sensation to cold</li> <li>○ If you know you have poor circulation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn.</li> <li>• Do not leave ice packs on while asleep.</li> <li>• Any activities that worsen your shoulder pain</li> <li>• Any heavy lifting or contact sports for 8–12 weeks.</li> </ul>

Once the worst of the pain begins to settle, it is important to start gently moving the injured arm. This may well be uncomfortable at first, but is essential to avoid future stiffness. Check that you can move your elbow, wrist and hand fully. Use your other arm to assist the movements of your injured shoulder. Move into discomfort, but short of pain. Repeat the exercises below 4-5 times daily.

Slow, controlled exercises are more effective and comfortable than quick movements.

Although the exercises may be hard work, tiring or tight, they should not be painful. If you experience intense or lasting pain (e.g. more than 30 minutes) reduce the exercises by doing them less forcefully or less often.

### Exercise 1:



Lean on a firm support with your uninjured arm.  
Allow your injured arm to hang loosely.

a) Slowly move your arm making 20 small clockwise circles - Start with small circles increasing to larger ones

b) Then move your arm backwards and forwards alongside your body.



Start with small movements and then gradually move as far as possible in each direction.

**Repeat both of these for 1-2 minutes.**

### Exercise 2

Move your shoulder forwards then out to the side



Do up to 10 movements in each direction.

After 2-3 days you can gradually discard your sling and progress your exercises to those listed over. Repeat all exercises 4-5 times daily and, as your arm becomes more mobile, steadily build up your level of activity.

### Exercise 3

Stand facing a wall, placing your hand flat against it. Slowly slide or 'walk' your hand up the wall as far as possible. Hold for 15 – 30 seconds. You can use a piece of blue tack to mark your daily progress. Remember to come down the wall slowly!

**Repeat 3 times.**



### Exercise 4

Reach up behind your back as far as possible with your injured arm. Compare with your other arm.

**Repeat up to 10 times.**



### Exercise 5 Wall push ups

- With feet and hands shoulder-width apart, place your palms on the wall, standing about an arm's length away.
- Keeping your knees straight and heels on the floor bend your elbows and lean forward as far as you comfortably can. Your elbows should be pointing down. Then push away from the wall to the starting position.

**Work up to 15 wall push-ups.**

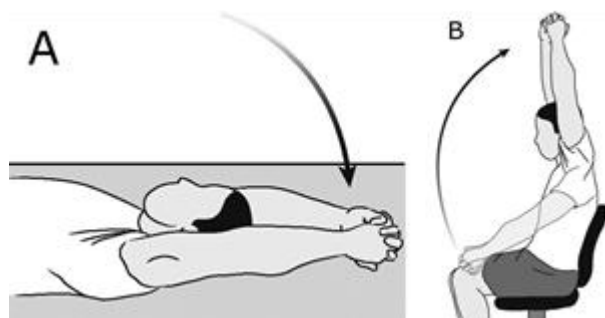
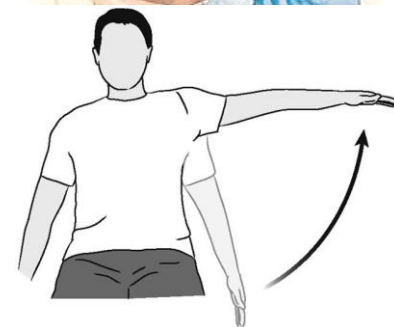


### Exercise 6. Shoulder side raises

Raise arm out to side, with elbow straight and palm downward.

Do not shrug your shoulder or tilt your body.

**Repeat up to 10 times and 4-5 times a day.**



### Shoulder Forward raises

This exercise can be done either lying down (A) or sitting down (B). Clasp hands together and lift arms above head. Keep your elbows as straight as possible. Hold for 10 seconds, then slowly lower your arms. Repeat 10 times. Do this 4-5 times a day

Depending on the nature and severity of your injury, it may take some months, to recover. It is a good idea to continue with the exercises until full movement has returned. Problems that may persist for some time include pain at night, especially if lying on the injured shoulder or when the shoulder is put in certain positions i.e. reaching behind your back or fully over your head.

### What should I take for Pain?

**Paracetamol** is useful to ease pain, but it is best to take them regularly for a few days or so rather than every now and then. They can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Make sure you do not take any other product containing Paracetamol.

**Anti-inflammatory painkillers** can also be used. These relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling, however if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you should not use them.

<p>If Paracetamol does not help at all despite taking the recommended dose then try changing to Ibuprofen 400 mg three times a day. You can also take both drugs – speak to a pharmacist about the best way to do this. If you have been advised not to take Ibuprofen in the past or are on any blood thinning tablets then avoid Ibuprofen.</p> <p><b>With all medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.</b></p>	<p>Side effects sometimes occur with anti-inflammatory painkillers - stomach pain and bleeding from the stomach, are the most serious. Some people with asthma, high blood pressure, kidney failure or heart failure may not be able to take them either. You can buy Ibuprofen at pharmacies both in tablet and gel form. There is less risk of side-effects with the gel, however, the amount of the drug that gets into the bloodstream is much less than with tablets and it is important that you use enough gel.</p>
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**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.**

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**

**Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056  
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073  
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353 or 802349  
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

#### **References:**

<http://cks.nice.org.uk/shoulder-pain>

<http://patient.info/health/frozen-shoulder-leaflet>

**“This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**