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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board

## Shoulder Injury Advice

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

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't 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 or frozen peas wrapped in a towel 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 can 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> </ul>

Begin the flexibility exercises as soon as you can - they may cause mild discomfort but this shouldn't be severe or last very long. They are designed to strengthen your muscles and so improve the range of movement and function of your arm. Slow, controlled exercises are more effective and comfortable than quick movements. Make sure that you move your elbow, wrist and hand fully as well. You can use your other arm to assist the movements of your injured shoulder if you need to. All these things are important to prevent further re-injury. The repetitions and sets are a guideline

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant  
Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit (MIU):  
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056 Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073  
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YF) MIU 01443 802353  
GUH: 01633 493287  
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

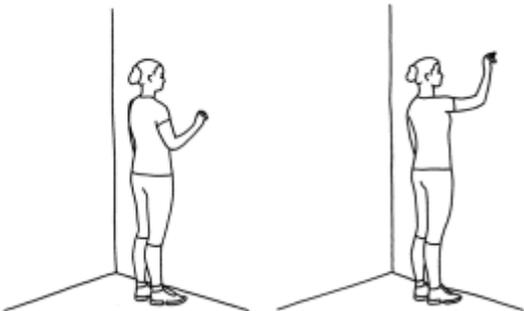
1. Lean on a firm support with your uninjured arm. Allow your injured arm to hang loosely.  
Slowly move your arm making clockwise and anticlockwise circles x10 each direction. Then move arm side to side x 10 and then swing forwards and backwards x10.



2. Sit in front of a table with clasped hands and a folded towel beneath them. Slide the towel forward as far as is comfortable. Return to starting position. X10



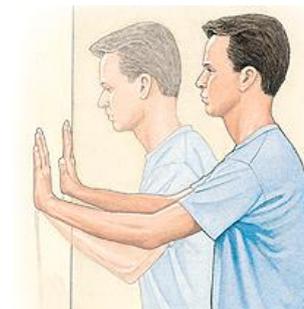
3. Stand facing the wall. Place the hand of the sore shoulder on the wall. Walk the fingers up the wall. Then slide back down.



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

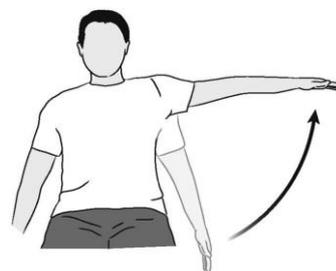
- With feet and hands shoulder-width apart, place your palms on the wall, standing about an arm's length away.
- Keeping your knees straight and heels on the floor, bend your elbows and lean forward as far as you comfortably can. Your elbows should be pointing down. Then push away from the wall to the starting position. Work up to 15 wall push-ups.



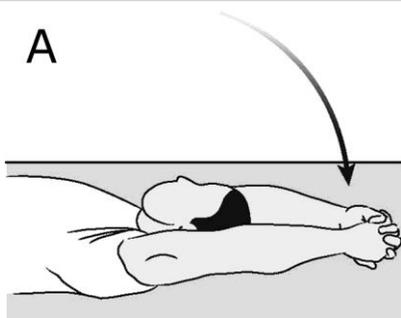
## Exercise 6. Shoulder side raises

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

Don't 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's 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.

## Work and returning to normal activities

Your return to work will depend on your job. You can self-certify for the first 7 days, but the Emergency Nurse Practitioners may be able to sign a 'Fit to Work' note.

If you participate in an active hobby then it is advised that you do not return to this until you have full strength, full range of movement and you can move your shoulder normally without experiencing pain or swelling.

## 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 don't take any other product containing Paracetamol. If Paracetamol doesn't 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.

**With all the medication it is essential that you follow the instructions on the packet or bottle carefully.**

**Anti-inflammatory painkillers**, like Ibuprofen, 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 shouldn't use them.

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 gel, however, the amount of drug that gets into the bloodstream is much less than with tablets and it is important that you use enough gel.

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP, or self-refer to your local physiotherapy department or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.**

Physio self-referral link:

[Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Physiotherapy Service \(wales.nhs.uk\)](https://www.wales.nhs.uk/physiotherapy)



If you are unable to do this electronically you should call 01495 768715 between 8.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

**References:** <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/shoulder-pain/#!scenario>  
Analgesia - mild-to-moderate pain | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE

**This document is available in Welsh/  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**