

The aims of physiotherapy are:

- To prevent stiffness developing in the joints of the affected arm
- To encourage your baby to move their arm
- Increase your baby's awareness of their arm

A physiotherapy programme may include:

- Exercises to keep your baby's muscles and joints flexible and ready to work if and when the nerve and muscle function improves
- How to move and handle your baby when caring for them
- Positions for play
- Advice on activities to help with your baby's development

Range of Movement Exercises

The aim of these exercises is for your baby to gain and maintain full movement of their joints.

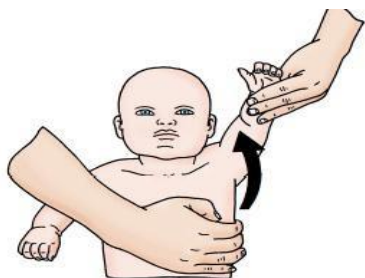
They should be performed with your baby lying flat on a firm surface. Their changing mat is an ideal place.

- Undertake the exercises at every nappy change, at least 3 times a day
- Perform slowly and gently
- Hold for 10 seconds at the end of the range
- Repeat each exercise 5 times
- Try to do the exercises when your baby is calm and relaxed, as there is risk of damage to the muscle if the baby is resisting the exercise

It is extremely important that you do not attempt to perform these exercises until you have been shown by a physiotherapist. They will inform you which specific exercises are appropriate for your baby.

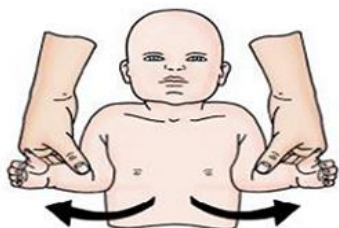
Shoulder Exercises

1. Shoulder Raising (flexion)



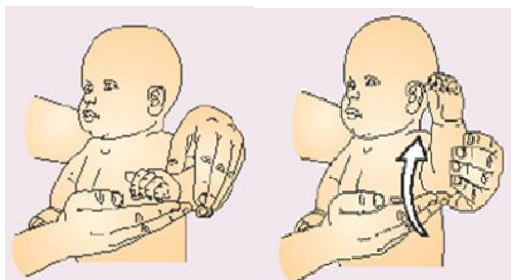
Gently hold your baby's forearm with one hand. With your other hand prevent their shoulder blade lifting up while you raise their arm slowly up over their head as far as you can. Keep the arm close to their ear.

2. Shoulder Rotation



Bend both your baby's elbows to 90° and keep elbows tucked into the side of their body. Take their hands out to the side towards the mat.

3. Shoulder Rotation with Arm to the Side



Raise your baby's arm out to shoulder level, then bend their elbow to 90°. Keeping this position, rotate your baby's arm back so their arm goes towards the bed.

4. Shoulder Out to the Side (Abduction)



Gently hold your baby's forearm with one hand. With your other hand prevent their shoulder blade lifting up while you raise their arm slowly out to the side and up towards their ear.

Elbow Exercises

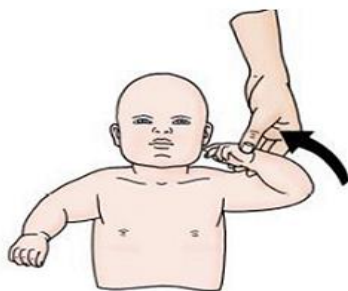
1. Palm Twist



Bend your baby's elbow to 90°. Hold firmly around your baby's arm in between their wrist and elbow. Rotate their forearm so that their palm turns towards their face and then toward their feet.

It is important that you hold onto the forearm and not their wrist.

2. Bending and straightening elbow



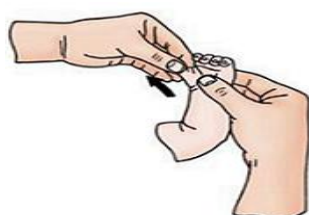
Hold your baby's arm above and below the elbow and gently bend and straighten the elbow fully.

Wrist, Finger and Thumb Exercises

1. Wrist and finger straightening



Hold your baby's hand with their fingers straight and bend their wrist backwards.



Hold your baby's thumb below where it joins the hand and straighten the thumb fully to the side.

Positioning and Handling

- If your baby's arm is very floppy it should be well supported with the hand, elbow and shoulder in the neutral position. Often a towel under the affected arm during sleep helps to keep the arm in a good position.
- Move your baby's arm gently for washing, drying, dressing and skin care. When dressing your baby, it is helpful to put the affected arm in the sleeve first and take it out last.

Your physiotherapist will advise you on which playing exercises are appropriate for your child, depending on their stage of development, and any adaptations required.

These exercises may be performed as often as you like and are done in addition to the range of movement exercises.

Dependent upon the extent of your child's injury you may have to assist the affected arm with these exercises.

Reaching Exercises



Lay your baby on their side with the affected arm uppermost. You may need to support your baby in this position by placing cushions or rolled up towels behind and in front of them. Put toys in front of them to encourage them to reach and play.



Place your baby on the floor and suspend or hold a toy above them. Encourage your baby to reach for the toy, especially with their affected arm.