

Shoulder Arthritis: Exercises

Introduction

Here are some examples of exercises for you to try. The exercises may be suggested for a condition or for rehabilitation. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercises if you start to have pain.

You will be told when to start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

How to do the exercises

Shoulder flexion (lying down)



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To make a wand for this exercise, use a piece of PVC pipe or a broom handle with the broom removed. Make the wand about a foot wider than your shoulders.

1. Lie on your back, holding a wand with both hands. Your palms should face down as you hold the wand.
2. Keeping your elbows straight, slowly raise your arms over your head. Raise them until you feel a stretch in your shoulders, upper back, and chest.
3. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Shoulder rotation (lying down)



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To make a wand for this exercise, use a piece of PVC pipe or a broom handle with the broom removed. Make the wand about a foot wider than your shoulders.

1. Lie on your back. Hold a wand with both hands with your elbows bent and palms up.
2. Keep your elbows close to your body, and move the wand across your body toward the sore arm.
3. Hold for 8 to 12 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Shoulder internal rotation with towel



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1. Hold a towel above and behind your head with the arm that is not sore.
2. With your sore arm, reach behind your back and grasp the towel.
3. With the arm above your head, pull the towel upward. Do this until you feel a stretch on the front and outside of your sore shoulder.
4. Hold 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

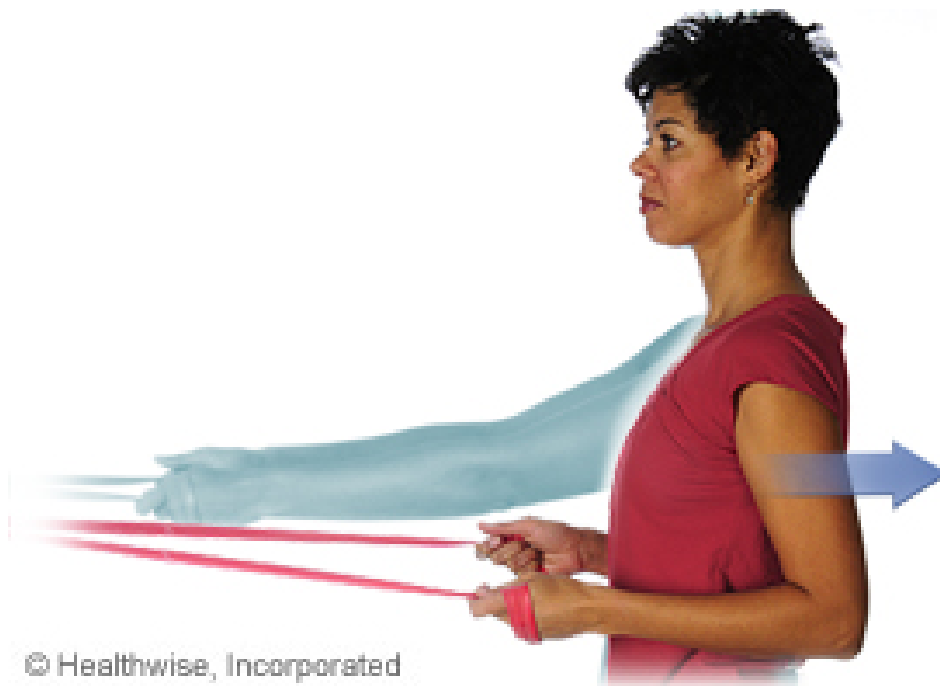
Shoulder blade squeeze



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1. Stand with your arms at your sides, and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Do not raise your shoulders up as you squeeze.
2. Hold 6 seconds.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Resisted rows



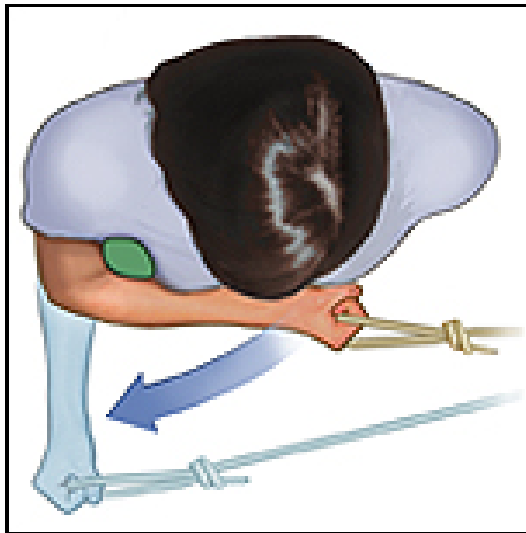
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For this exercise, you will need elastic exercise material, such as surgical tubing or Thera-Band.

1. Put the band around a solid object at about waist level. (A bedpost will work well.) Each hand should hold an end of the band.
2. With your elbows at your sides and bent to 90 degrees, pull the band back. Your shoulder blades should move toward each other. Return to the starting position.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

External rotator strengthening exercise

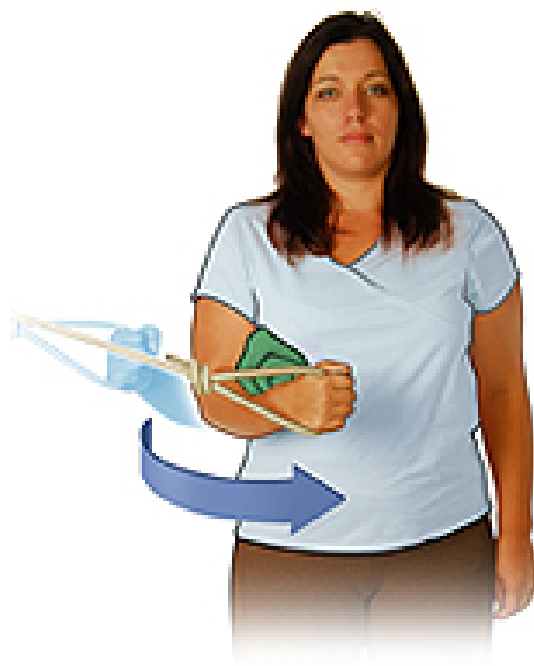
View from above



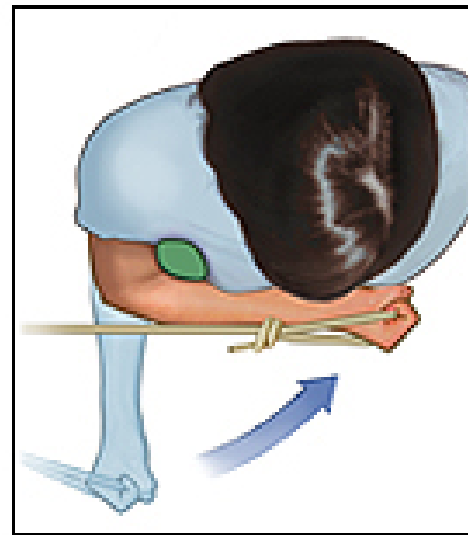
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1. Start by tying a piece of elastic exercise material to a doorknob. You can use surgical tubing or Thera-Band. (You may also hold one end of the band in each hand.)
2. Stand or sit with your shoulder relaxed and your elbow bent 90 degrees. Your upper arm should rest comfortably against your side. Squeeze a rolled towel between your elbow and your body for comfort. This will help keep your arm at your side.
3. Hold one end of the elastic band with the hand of the painful arm.
4. Start with your forearm across your belly. Slowly rotate the forearm out away from your body. Keep your elbow and upper arm tucked against the towel roll or the side of your body until you begin to feel tightness in your shoulder. Slowly move your arm back to where you started.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Internal rotator strengthening exercise



View from above



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1. Start by tying a piece of elastic exercise material to a doorknob. You can use surgical tubing or Thera-Band.
2. Stand or sit with your shoulder relaxed and your elbow bent 90 degrees. Your upper arm should rest comfortably against your side. Squeeze a rolled towel between your elbow and your body for comfort. This will help keep your arm at your side.
3. Hold one end of the elastic band in the hand of the painful arm.
4. Slowly rotate your forearm toward your body until it touches your belly. Slowly move it back to where you started.
5. Keep your elbow and upper arm firmly tucked against the towel roll or at your side.
6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Pendulum swing



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If you have pain in your back, do not do this exercise.

1. Hold on to a table or the back of a chair with your good arm. Then bend forward a little and let your sore arm hang straight down. This exercise does not use the arm muscles. Rather, use your legs and your hips to create movement that makes your arm swing freely.
2. Use the movement from your hips and legs to guide the slightly swinging arm back and forth like a pendulum (or elephant trunk). Then guide it in circles that start small (about the size of a dinner plate). Make the circles a bit larger each day, as your pain allows.
3. Do this exercise for 5 minutes, 5 to 7 times each day.
4. As you have less pain, try bending over a little farther to do this exercise. This will increase the amount of movement at your shoulder.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **H562** in the search box to learn more about **"Shoulder Arthritis: Exercises"**.

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