Rotator Cuff Related Shoulder Pain
Physiotherapy Department

We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.
To use the Text Relay service, prefix all numbers with 18001.

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The Shoulder

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint. Movement occurs at the top of the arm where the head of humerus (ball) and the glenoid (socket) meet. Muscles and tendons hold the joint in place and help with movement. The main tendon in the shoulder is known as the rotator cuff, which is made up of 4 muscles and tendons.

So Why Does My Shoulder Hurt?

The most common type of shoulder pain is due to irritated tendons. They often become painful due to change. This may be something minor that your shoulder is not used to, like spring cleaning. It can also be due to overload in the shoulder over several years.

What Can I Do To Help Myself?

Lifestyle – Smoking and fatty diets can delay healing due to chemicals in your body.

Exercise - tendons work well when being used. If a tendon is not being used normally, this can delay recovery. Your physiotherapist can develop a personalised exercise programme to achieve your goals as quick as possible.

Sleeping – avoid sleeping on the painful side. A ‘V’ pillow under your shoulder can also help.

Stand opposite a wall and throw the ball against the wall catching it again – repeat.

All exercise images provided with consent of www.physiotec.ca

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.
Stage Two Exercises

Place ball up onto a countertop or heavy table. Position your hands shoulder-width apart on the ball, with your arms outstretched. Perform a push up.

Sit up straight in a chair. Bounce a large ball three times with one hand – repeat – you can increase the speed to make this more challenging.

Walking on all fours backwards and forwards – stay in control.

What Can Physiotherapy do for my painful shoulder?

They will offer advice along with an exercise programme. You will benefit from completing your exercises regularly.

How long will it take for me to get better?

It is difficult to put a time frame on recovery. However, using your shoulder tendons with your exercises will help you achieve your goals.

What if my shoulder is too painful?

There are several ways to try to reduce your pain.

- **Pain killers** – try speaking to your pharmacist or GP, they can help with the right combination of medication and dosage.
- **Pace yourself** – think about how much you are using your shoulder during the day and take short breaks, particularly from positions of pain. You will work with your physio on specific loading.
- **Change your position** – try not to keep your shoulder in a painful position for long – especially if this is moving or lifting above your head.

Exercises can be done in two stages
Stage One Exercises

Standing close to a doorway. Bend your elbow at 90 degrees, keep it close to you with the back of your hand turned against the wall. Push your wrist outwards against the wall. Hold for the 40 seconds and relax.

Raise your arm in front of you to an acceptable level of discomfort – return to original position – repeat. Use small weight.

Raise your arm to the side at a slight diagonal to an acceptable level of discomfort – hold a small weight and repeat.

Bend your elbows 90° whilst holding a band. Put a little bit of tension on the band. Lift your arms to an acceptable level of pain or as indicated.

Place your hands on the wall. Bend your arms and lean your upper body forward slowly performing a push up.

Lie on your back with a weight in your top hand, elbow bent to 90 degrees. Lift the weight up then down again.