

Large Rotator Cuff Tears & the Anterior Deltoid Strengthening Programme



Introduction

Warm Up

1 Stage 1 Exercises

2 Stage 2 Exercises

3 Stage 3 Exercises

4 Stage 4 Exercises

5 Stage 5 Exercises

It is OK to feel some discomfort whilst completing the following exercises, which is entirely normal to begin with, providing the pain is not significantly worse the following day. We recommend to only exercise up to around 4-5/10 if zero is no pain and 10/10 is severe pain.

The Rotator Cuff

- The rotator cuff is a group of 4 muscles that are situated around your shoulder blade.
- They help you to raise your arm up into the air, and are key muscles that contribute to the strength of your shoulder.
- The rotator cuff muscles attach to the Humerus (arm bone) and have tendons which join the muscles to the bone.

Rotator Cuff Tears

- Unfortunately injury can occur to the rotator cuff muscles through a variety of ways.
- For example, as a result of sudden trauma (such as a fall), as well as prolonged overuse and normal degeneration of these muscles, injury can take place within the rotator cuff.
- This can be in the form of a tear within the rotator cuff. And these tears can be of varying sizes, such as full or partial thickness tears.

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Management of a Rotator Cuff Tear

- Contrary to common beliefs, having a tear of a rotator cuff muscle does not necessarily mean that you need surgery.
- Conservative management (avoiding surgery) can often be just as effective at helping a person reduce their pain and regain function, getting back to their normal activities.
- There is a strong and powerful muscle around the shoulder joint called the "Deltoid" muscle which can be trained and strengthened to help compensate for the rotator cuff which may be limiting shoulder function.

The Anterior Deltoid Strengthening Programme

- This programme aims to strengthen the Deltoid muscle of the shoulder in order to help better assist the rotator cuff muscles in lifting and using the arm.
- The programme gradually progresses over time in order to continually challenge the Deltoid muscle and keep getting it stronger.
- Ideally the exercises should be done 3-5 times every day depending on levels of pain.
- We recommend a minimum of 3 months with this programme in order to hopefully see improvements in pain and function.

W Warm Up: Pendulum Swings



- Stand leaning forward and hold onto a chair or table top with your unaffected arm.
- Let your affected arm hang free down towards the floor.
- Gently swing your arm:
 - a) In circles.
 - b) Forwards and backwards.
 - c) Side to side.

Do this for 2-3 minutes before starting your other exercises.

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STAGE 1

1A Short Lever Supine Isometric



- Lie on your back with a pillow to support your head and knees bent.
- Raise your affected arm up as shown in the photo, and bend your elbow to a right angle, this reduces the length of your arm, making the exercise slightly easier. Use your other hand to help lift your arm if required.
- Then let go with your unaffected arm and hold the affected arm straight up as shown in the first picture.
- Hold your arm in this position for as long as you can until it becomes tired or too uncomfortable. Aim for up to 3 minutes if possible.
- Then bring the arm back down to your side, using your unaffected arm to assist in lowering it down.

Aim for up to 3 minutes if possible.

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1B Short Lever Supine Arc



- Lie on your back with a pillow to support your head and knees bent.
- Raise your affected arm up as shown in the photo, and bend your elbow to a right angle. Use your other hand to help lift your arm if required.
- Move your arm forwards and backwards in a small arc as the diagram shows.
- Slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.
- As your shoulder gets stronger you will manage to move your arm further.
- Aim to reach the arm to the pillow and your thigh.
- Once this exercise is easy progress to exercise 2(a).

Slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.

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STAGE 2

2A Long Lever Supine Isometric



- Lie on your back with a pillow to support your head and knees bent.
- Raise your affected arm up as shown in the photo, have your arm fully extended this time. Use your other hand to help lift if required.
- Then let go with your unaffected arm and hold the affected arm straight up as shown in the first picture.
- Hold your arm in this position for as long as you can until it becomes tired or too uncomfortable. Aim for up to 3 minutes if possible.
- Then bring the arm back down to your side, using your unaffected arm to assist in lowering it down.

Aim for up to 3 minutes if possible.

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2B Long Lever Supine Arc



- Lie on your back with a pillow to support your head, with your knees bent.
- Start in the same position as exercise 2 (a) with the affected arm extended above you.
- Move your arm forwards and backwards in a small arc as the diagram shows.
- Slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.
- As your shoulder gets stronger you will manage to move you arm further.
- Aim to reach the arm to the pillow and your thigh.
Once this exercise is easy progress to exercise 2 (c).

Slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.

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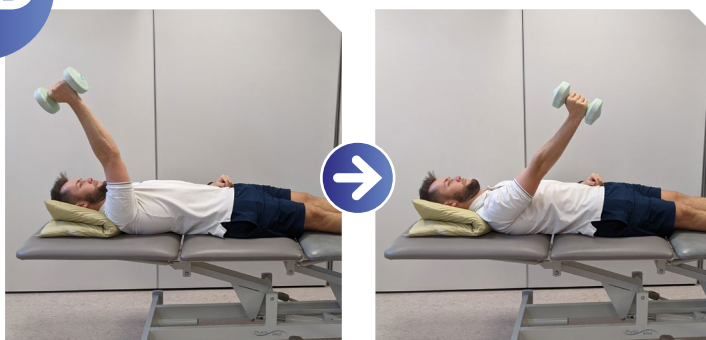
2c Long Lever Supine Weighted Isometric



- Lie on your back in same position as the previous exercises.
- This time hold a light weight in your hand.
- You could use items such as a tin of beans or a small bottle of water.
- Keep your arm straight and maintain the position for as long you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.
- Once you can manage this easily, progress to exercise 2 (d).

Aim for up to 3 minutes if possible.

2D Long Lever Supine Weighted Arc



- Lie on your back in same position as the previous exercises.
- This time hold a light weight in your hand.
- You could use items such as a tin of beans or a small bottle of water.
- Keep your arm straight and move slowly back and forwards in a small arc, just as in the previous exercise.
- Repeat slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.
- Once you can manage this easily, progress to exercise 3 (a).

Slow smooth movement for up to 5 minutes.

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STAGE 3

3A 1/4 Lying Long Lever Isometric



- Lie in a 1/4 lying position, with your torso elevated slightly above a completely flat position. (you could use pillows or a rolled up duvet to prop yourself up).
- Start with the arm at shoulder height, out in front of you. (if you need to use your other arm to help lift it you can).
- Hold your arm where it is without any support.

Hold for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

3B 1/4 Lying Long Lever Arc



- Complete the same exercise as above, however this time slowly move your arm straight up and down in a small arc.
- Build this up slowly until you are able to do this for up to 3-5minutes.
- Gradually increase the size of the arc as you are able to, by going further down towards your hip, and higher up above your head.

Build this up slowly until you are able to do this for up to 3-5minutes.

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3c 1/4 Lying Long Lever Weighted Isometric



- Once you are able to manage exercises 3 (a) and (b) without any problems, progress to this exercise by adding a weight.
- Add a small weight and hold your arm straight out in front of you.

Maintain this position as long you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

3D 1/4 Lying Long Lever Weighted Arc



- Start the exercise in the same 1/4 lying position as previously.
- Hold a small weight in your hand and extend your arm out in front of you, use the other arm to assist in lifting if needed.
- Keeping your arm straight, move in small arc, just as in the previous arc exercise.

Build this up so that you are able to do this for 3-5 minutes.

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STAGE 4

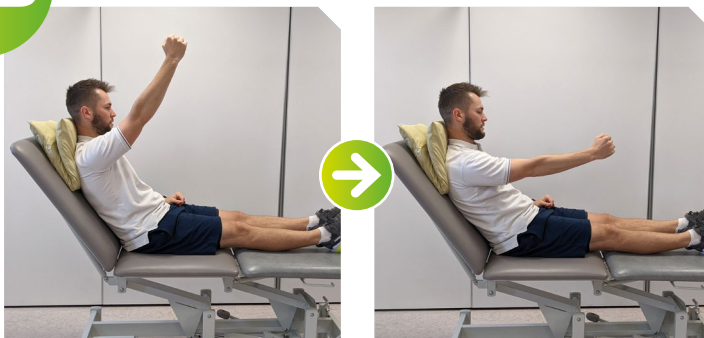
4A 1/2 Sitting Long Lever Isometric



- Sit in a 1/2 sitting / slightly reclined position (use pillows / duvet to prop you up into this position if needed).
- Lift your arm straight out in front to shoulder height.
- Keep your arm straight and maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

Maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

4B 1/2 Sitting Long Lever Arc



- Sit into a 1/2 sitting / slightly reclined position (use pillows / duvet to prop you up into this position if needed).
- Lift your arm straight out in front to shoulder height.
- Keeping your arm straight, slowly go up and down in a small arc.
- Build this up to 3-5 minutes as you are able to.
- Increase the size of the arc once this becomes easier.

Build this up to 3-5 minutes as you are able to.

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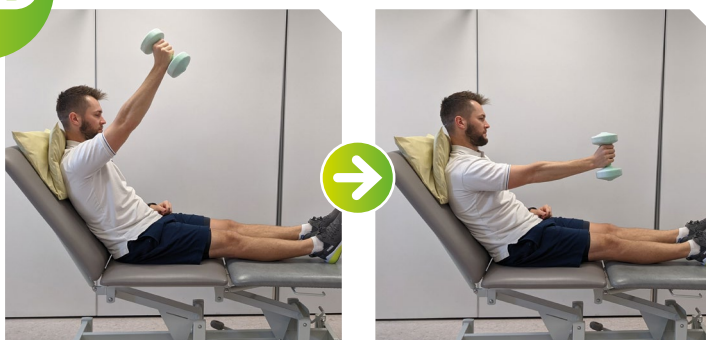
4c 1/2 Sitting Long Lever Weighted Isometric



- Sit in a 1/2 sitting / slightly reclined position (use pillows / duvet to prop you up into this position if needed).
- Hold a small weight in your hand and lift your arm straight out in front to shoulder height.
- Keep your arm straight and maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

Maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

4D 1/2 Sitting Long Lever Weighted Arc



- Sit in a 1/2 sitting / slightly reclined position (use pillows / duvet to prop you up into this position if needed).
- Hold a small weight in your hand and lift your arm straight out in front to shoulder height.
- Keeping your arm straight, slowly go up and down in a small arc.
- Build this up to 3-5 minutes as you are able to.
- Increase the size of the arc once this becomes easier.

Build this up to 3-5 minutes as you are able to.

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STAGE 5

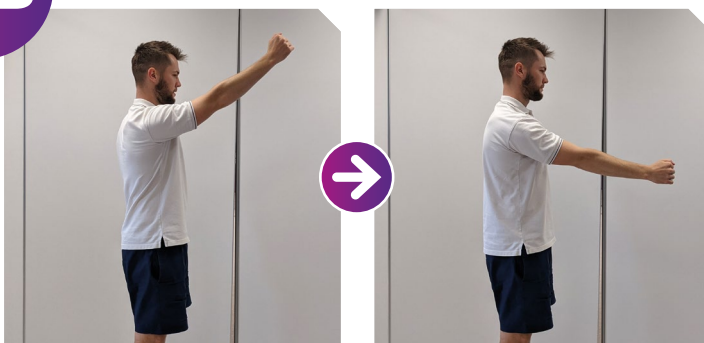
5A Standing Long Lever Isometric



- In a standing position (you can rest your back against a wall if you feel you need to).
- Lift arm out in front of you to shoulder height.
- Keep your arm straight and maintain this position as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

Maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

5B Standing Long Lever Arc



- In a standing position (you can rest your back against a wall if you feel you need to).
- Lift arm out in front of you to shoulder height.
- Move up and down slowly in a small arc.
- Increase the size of the arc gradually as you are able to

Build this up to 3-5 minutes as you are able to.

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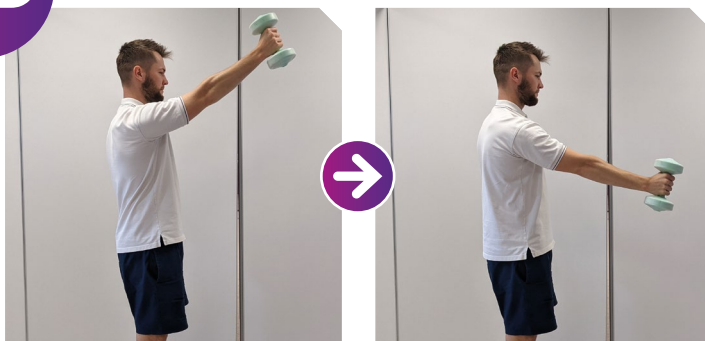
5c Standing Long Lever Weighted Isometric



- In a standing position (you can rest your back against a wall if you feel you need to).
- Hold a small weight and lift arm out in front of you to shoulder height.
- Keep your arm straight and maintain this position as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

Maintain this position for as long as you're able to, up to 3 minutes if possible.

5D Standing Long Lever Weighted Arc



- In a standing position.
- Hold a small weight and lift your arm out in front of you to shoulder height.
- Move up and down slowly in a small arc.
- Begin with a small arc, and gradually increase the size of the arc over time as you are able to.

Aim to do this for between 3-5 minutes.