Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Shoulder Exercises Level 1 v2

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Shoulder Exercises Level 1

Patient Information

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Physiotherapy Services

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Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while every precaution was taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding injury, or whether or not you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your General Practitioner (GP) or Physiotherapist prior to commencing any exercises shown here.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this discomfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and doesn't have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

The exercise plans shown here are designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; they are not exhaustive and can be modified and progressed under the supervision of your physiotherapist.

Instructions

- Aim to do the exercise plan 3 to 4 times per week, with at least 1 day off in between to allow for recovery.
- Each exercise is repeated a number of times (for example, 5 or 10 times) to build up strength and flexibility. The repetitions make a 'set'.
- The number of repetitions is a guide and can be increased or decreased according to pain levels. If the exercise causes pain that lasts for more than 2 hours after finishing the exercise, then decrease the repetitions.
- Complete each exercise slowly and in a controlled manner; you should take your time and not rush. Take 30 seconds rest in between each set.

Contact the Physio department if you find the exercises are making your pain worse overall.

Contact Information

Leigh Health Centre
Telephone: 0300 707 1597
Email: wwl-tr.leighphysio@nhs.net

Platt Bridge Health Centre
Telephone: 0300 707 1772
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Wigan Health Centre, Boston House
Telephone: 0300 707 1113
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Therapy Department- Wrightington Hospital
Telephone: 01257 256305
Email: Wwl-tr.therapyadmin@nhs.net

Shoulder Exercises Level 1 – Exercises 1 to 9



1.

Pendulum in Standing

Stand beside a table or chair, leaning on your unaffected hand.

Let your affected arm hang relaxed straight down.

Swing your arm forwards and backwards.

You can also vary the directions by including across the body, diagonals and even circles

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1. Table Slides

Sit or stand. Place the hand of the affected arm on a table on a towel or cloth to help them slide.

Slide your hands along the table as far as you can without lifting your shoulders.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1. Table Slides

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Sit or stand. Place the hand of the affected arm on a table on a towel or cloth to help them slide.

Slide your hands out sideways along the table as far as you can without lifting your shoulders.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1.

Assisted External Rotation

Sit or stand with both elbows bent as shown. Hold a stick of some sort with both hands. A walking stick or brush handle work very well.

Push the stick sideways to rotate the upper arm outwards but keep the elbow pressed into your side. Repeat both directions.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1. Hand Behind Back

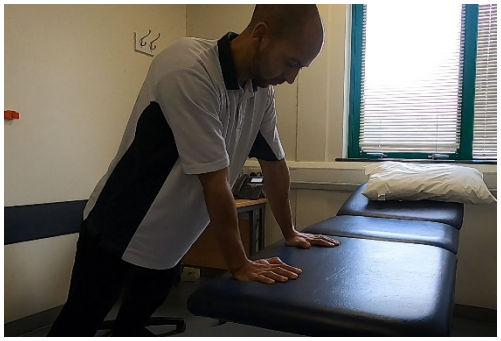
Stand holding a stick or brush handle behind your back with your elbows straight.

Bend your elbows to slide the stick up the back.

The closer your hands are together, the more intense the stretch.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1.

Forward Lean Weight Shifting

Stand and lean forwards onto a table.

Your hands should be in line with your shoulders.

Keep your shoulders back, and your neck and back straight.

Gently lean from side to side, taking your weight over each shoulder in turn.

Keep your elbows extended and locked.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1.

Supine Ceiling Punches

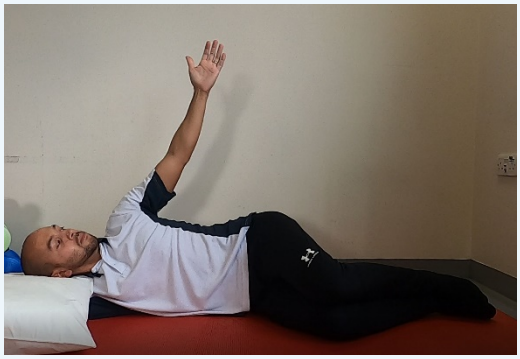
Lying on your back, elbow of the affected arm bent and by your side (as shown).

Straighten that arm towards the ceiling.

Hold 2-3 seconds, then slowly bend it and return it to your side.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1. Side Lying Abduction

Lying on your unaffected side, with your affected arm resting on your hip.

Lift your arm to the side and up with the thumb leading the movement.

Lower the arm slowly back to the starting position.

This can be done with a bent elbow instead if it proves to be too difficult with a straight arm.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



1.

Side Lying External Rotation

Side lying with your hips and knees bent. A towel or pillow is placed under your top arm (affected arm) and your elbow bent to 90 degrees.

Keep your upper arm in place and bring your hand up towards the ceiling.

Return to the starting position in a controlled manner.

Repeat 10 times.

Sets 3



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