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Clinician Notes

This handout contains general exercises for Rotator Cuff Tear. Phase 1 should be completed early after injury to allow pain to ease and to keep movement in shoulder. progress to phase 2 when pain lessens, approx 2-4 weeks after injury. Phase 3 should be 4-8 weeks after injury is no longer painful and is targeted at improving strength.

No exercises should cause sharp, shooting or intense pain. Aching, stretching or discomfort may be present but should reduce over time as exercises are completed daily.

Your physician may recommend specific exercises within this program based on your diagnosis/condition.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Circular Shoulder Pendulum with Table Support

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin in a standing position with your trunk bent forward, one arm resting on a table for support and your other arm hanging toward the ground.

Movement

Slowly shift your body weight in a circular motion, letting your hanging arm swing in a circle at the same time.

Tip

Make sure the movement comes from your body shifting and do not use your arm muscles to create the circular motion.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Supine Bilateral Shoulder Protraction

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your arms straight up in the air.

Movement

Keeping your arms straight, gently punch your arms toward the ceiling. Return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Your back and neck should remain on the floor.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Seated Shoulder Press Ups Off Table

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin sitting upright with your feet hanging off the edge of a table.

Movement

Place your hands in fists by your hips and push down into the table, lifting your body up. Lower yourself back down and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight throughout the exercise and do not shrug your shoulders.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Seated Single Arm Shoulder External Rotation

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin sitting in an upright position with a towel roll tucked between your arm and your side, and that elbow bent.

Movement

Keeping your elbow tucked, pull your hand out to the side, rotating your shoulder.

Tip

Do not shrug your shoulder during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Chicken Wing

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin standing.

Movement

Clasp your hands in front of you, then bring your arms up and behind your head, keeping your fingers clasped. Slowly bring your elbows together until they touch, then pull them apart and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your shoulders down during the exercise. If needed, you may unclasp your fingers behind your head.

STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



Bird Dog on Counter

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position with your hands resting on a counter.

Can also be complete on hands and knees on floor for more difficulty.

Movement

Step backward into a plank position. At the same time lift one arm overhead and your opposite leg off the ground. Return to the plank position and repeat with the opposite arm and leg.

Tip

Make sure to keep your abdominals engaged during the exercise. Do not arch your back or shrug your shoulders during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Seated Upper Trapezius Stretch

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1 and 2

Setup

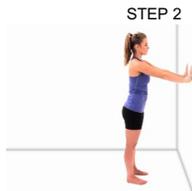
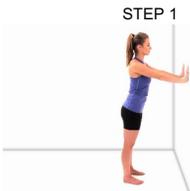
Begin sitting upright in a chair.

Movement

Reach your hand toward the floor, then slowly sidebend your head to the opposite side and hold.

Tip

Make sure to keep gently reaching your hand toward the floor during the stretch.



Scapular Protraction at Wall

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin standing with your hands resting on a wall in front of you at shoulder height.

Movement

Push your upper back away from the wall, pulling your shoulder blades apart, then relax and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep the rest of your body straight during the exercise.



Prone Single Shoulder Flexion

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin lying on your front with your arm extended straight, palm down.

Movement

Shift your shoulder blade down and lift your arm off the floor. Hold, then relax and repeat.

Tip

Make sure not to arch your back or shrug your shoulder during the exercise.



Sidelying Shoulder ER with Towel and Dumbbell

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin lying on your side with a towel roll tucked under your upper arm, and your elbow bent to 90 degrees, holding a dumbbell.

Movement

Slowly rotate your forearm upward, then return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your elbow bent and tucked in at your side as you lift your forearm and avoid shrugging your shoulders during the exercise.



Dynamic Hug

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position with feet shoulder width apart and arms relaxed at your sides.

Movement

Slowly raise your arms and bring your fingertips together as if you were wrapping your arms around a beach ball. Then slowly return to the starting position.

Tip

Avoid shrugging your shoulders or letting your elbows flare at the top of the motion.



Sleeper Stretch

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin by lying on your side with your bottom arm bent upward at a 90 degree angle.

Movement

With your other arm, apply a gentle downward pressure until you feel a stretch in your shoulder.

Tip

Make sure not to let your body roll forward or backward during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Gentle Levator Scapulae Stretch

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2 and 3

Setup

Begin sitting upright in a chair, grasping the edge with one hand.

Movement

Rotate your head to the side opposite your anchored arm, then tuck your chin towards your chest. You should feel a stretch on the back of your neck and above your shoulder blade.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Wall Push Up with Plus

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin standing with your hands resting on a wall in front of you at shoulder height.

Can complete knee push up on floor if wall push up is not challenging enough.

Movement

Bend your elbows, leaning your body towards the wall, then push yourself back into the starting position and continue, pulling your shoulder blades apart, and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to bend only at the elbows and keep the rest of your body straight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Prone W Scapular Retraction

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your front with your arms resting on the ground at a 45 degree angle from your sides and elbows bent so they form a W shape.

Movement

Lift your arms off the ground, then lower them back to the ground and repeat. Think of squeezing your shoulder blades together as you lift your arms.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back relaxed and do not shrug your shoulders during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Wall Ball Circles in Scaption with Mini Swiss Ball

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position holding a small weighted ball against a wall, with your arm straight and your torso turned about 30 degrees toward the wall.

Movement

Gently push into the ball, then roll it in small, tight circles, moving only your arm. Then change direction and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Full Range Shoulder Flexion with Dumbbells

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

phase 3

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position, holding a dumbbell in each hand.

Movement

Lift your arms straight forward then overhead. Slowly lower your arms back to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight and do not shrug your shoulders during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Plank on Knees

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your front, propped up on your elbows.

Movement

Engage your abdominal muscles and lift your hips up into a plank position, keeping your elbows directly under your shoulders. Hold this position.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight and maintain a gentle chin tuck during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Thoracic Extension Mobilization with Noodle

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying with your upper back on a pool noodle and your arms straight at your sides.

Can also use half foam roller, rolled up towel or alternative.

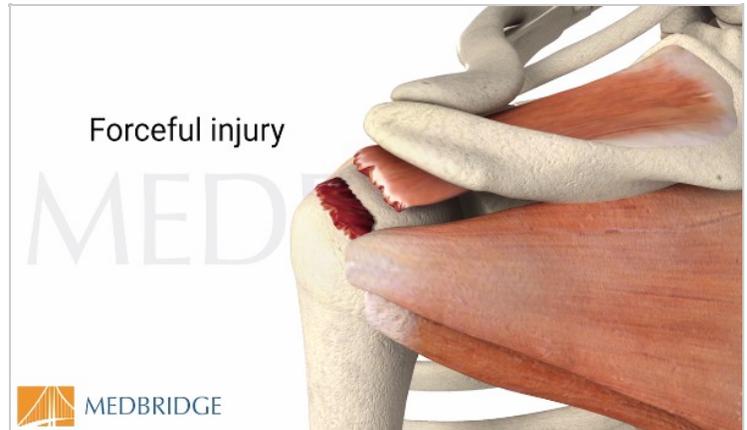
Movement

Slowly lift your arms straight up and overhead, as you let your back relax. Pause briefly, then return to the starting position and repeat.

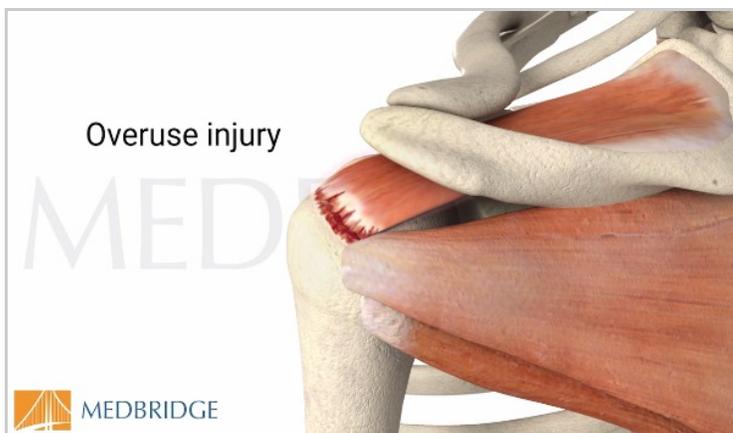
Tip

Make sure not to let your hips rise up off the floor during the exercise.

Rotator Cuff Tear



Back Left Shoulder: Forceful Injury



Rotator cuff tears are one of the most common injuries of the shoulder. The shoulder is a ball and socket joint with the arm bone (humerus) meeting the shallow socket called the glenoid fossa. This socket is part of the shoulder blade (scapula).

The term “rotator cuff” refers to four muscles of the shoulder that help to support the shoulder joint during rest and movement. These muscles, known as the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis, attach the shoulder blade and upper arm bone, and keep the arm bone against the shoulder socket.

Rotator cuff muscles and tendons can be injured over time, or with a sudden injury such as a fall. In an overuse injury, the soft tissues may start to fray, often caused by repeated activities. A tear can be partial or complete, with the muscle being torn into two pieces.

Symptoms of a rotator cuff tear can include shoulder pain, stiffness, and weakness. You may have difficulty raising the arm overhead or lifting objects, especially above shoulder height. Getting dressed, washing your hair, or tucking in a shirt can be difficult. Sleeping can be limited because of shoulder pain.

While recovering from rotator cuff injuries, you may need to avoid activities that are repeated or painful, such as swimming or playing tennis. Therapy can help you learn how to keep the shoulder moving while protecting the healing tissues with activities for stretching, strengthening, and healthy posture.