

Shoulder Care

A Guide to Management



Introduction

Shoulder injuries take time to settle or improve and you need to do what you can to help this process and avoid making things worse or slowing down recovery. You may need to continue with some of the changes in activity suggested in this booklet over the long term as a prevention to further shoulder trouble.

Please speak with your health care professional if you have any queries.

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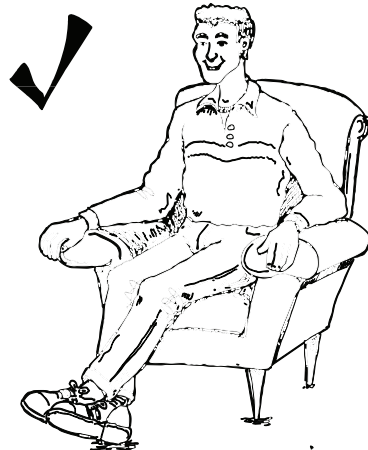
Acknowledgements:

Illustrations by Nicola Neutze

Sitting Posture

Keep both shoulders down, resting both hands in your lap is best. If watching television, check your posture during the commercials.

When sitting on a lounge chair or sofa avoid resting your painful shoulder on the chair arm and then leaning through it.



Movements to Avoid with a Sore Shoulder

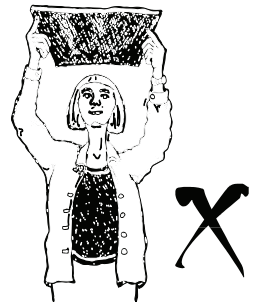
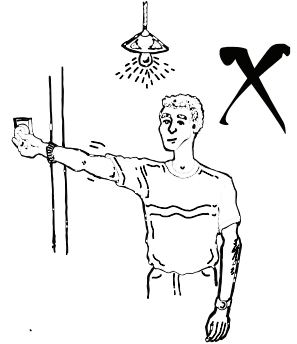
- » Mopping the floor.
- » Lifting pans from the stove to the worktop and back.
- » Lifting shopping bags from the trolley into the car boot.
- » Ironing.

Avoid any pulling or pushing that needs a lot of force. Avoid any activity that places your sore shoulder and arm above your head. This may include such activities as:

- » Hanging washing outside on the line.
- » Getting things out of overhead cupboards.
- » Cleaning windows and mirrors.
- » Reaching up to high door locks.
- » Having a microwave above the oven or on top of the fridge.
- » Putting things into and taking things out of a wall oven can also cause pain.

Avoid lifting heavy objects in front of you with outstretched arms. Avoid doing the same movement over and over. Some things to avoid here might be;

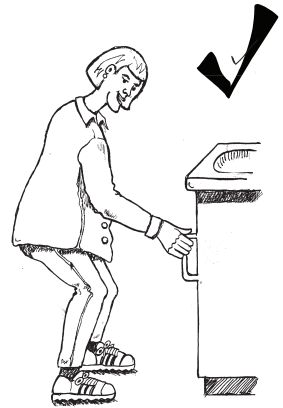
- » Stirring and mixing.
- » Dusting and polishing.
- » Scrubbing.
- » Brushing and raking outside.



Changing Your Movement to Reduce Shoulder Pain/Damage

Think about how you are using your shoulder and arms to do everyday activity around the house. If you were about to do one of the movements that should be avoided stop and try:

- » turning to face the activity,
- » move closer to it,
- » using two arms to pull, push or lift,
- » having your arms working in front of you and not out to the side.



Tips for Changing Movements

Keep objects close to your body, do not lift pans, kettles, watering cans etc with a straight arm.

If some jobs have to be done with your arm stretching out to your side try to avoid lifting and slide things with two hands.

Move items that you use a lot such as cups or plates to a place where you can reach them easily without stretching up or a long way forward.

You may need to change some activity for a while, for example, hanging washing on a clothes airer instead of the outside line. Make sure you have rest breaks if you are doing a repetitive job such as ironing or gardening.

You may be able to break the job into shorter sessions doing a little activity daily rather than all at once.

Shoulder Pain at Night

Pain at night often occurs and can be an indication that activity during the day has 'stirred up' the shoulder.

- » Go back and read the suggestions on how to change movement during everyday activity.
- » Take regular pain relief if it has been prescribed, don't wait until the pain becomes worse.
- » Experiment with different sleeping positions to find one which gives you the most relief.
- » Try the relaxation on the following pages.
- » It can be useful to write down what you have done during the day when your shoulder is particularly sore at night. Has a certain activity or the amount of activity increased your pain?

Shoulder Relaxation

- » Just allow your eyes to close as you take a big breath in and sigh as you breathe out.
As you breathe out, feel the tension drain away, do this three times.
Allow your breathing to become even.
- » Focus your attention on your right hand, allow the hand and fingers to be soft, the wrist and elbow to become loose, the shoulder to let go.
- » Focus your attention on your left hand, allow the hand and fingers to be soft, the wrist and elbow to become loose, the shoulder to let go.
- » Focus your attention on your tummy area, this is a place we often store a lot of tension, allow the muscles to let go and become loose, allow this feeling to travel up the front of your body to your throat and neck and let these muscles become loose.
- » Spend a few moments sitting being aware of how loose and soft your arms, shoulders, tummy and neck feel, be aware of your even breathing.
Let your mind go to a restful, peaceful place.
- » Gradually become aware of the sounds around you and the feelings in your arms and shoulders, open your eyes,
- » take three more deep breaths and feel ready to continue with your activities.



An Australian Government Initiative

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For more information about this and other services offered by Resthaven, visit:

www.resthaven.asn.au

Fees

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