

Minor Injuries Department

Self Treatment of Soft Tissue

Shoulder Injuries



Shoulder pain is one of the most common joint complaints. This can be due to an injury or can gradually increase over time.

In the first few days:

- Over the counter medication can be helpful. We recommend paracetamol as first line pain relief. **(Always check the label before use.)** See your GP if you require alternative pain relief.
- Short term rest and may be beneficial, however begin to move your shoulder as your symptoms improve.
- You may have been provided with a sling. Use this for a maximum of 1 week, removing regularly to complete your exercises. Evidence suggests that longer term use of the sling may slow your recovery.

Emergency Department

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Longer term management:

- An active approach including movement and exercise is beneficial. Return to normal activities as quickly as pain allows.
- Fear can cause a barrier to recovery. Being positive improves quality of life and can improve outcome!
- Cardiovascular exercise will improve blood flow to the injured area. This will improve function, improve the ability to work and reduce the need for pain medication. Try to continue regular exercise such as walking, swimming or cycling as you are able.
- There is strong evidence supporting the use of exercises. These will help improve movement and strength.
- Repeat the following exercises as many times as you are able. Do these several times per day.
- It is common for soft tissue injuries to take 6 – 8 weeks to recover. If you feel you are not recovering and wish further advice, contact the musculoskeletal helpline. The number is detailed on the back page of this booklet. This service can refer to physiotherapy if appropriate.

Exercise 1



With your arm by your side on a pillow.

Squeeze your shoulder blades together feeling the muscles in the middle of your back contract.

Exercise 2



Lean forward allowing your shoulder to relax. Gently move your arm forwards and backwards, side to side and in a circle.

Exercise 3



Gradually walk your fingers up a wall reaching upwards as far as you are able.

Exercise 4



Clasp your hands and use the unaffected side to help the upwards movement.

Useful Information and Contacts:



NHS Forth Valley website has lots of useful information and contacts: www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/know-who-to-turn-to-when-you-are-ill

GP contact details can be found at www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/local-service-finder/ or by calling NHS 24 on 111.

NHS Inform provides health information and details of services and support in your area. Call free on 0800 224488 or visit www.nhsinform.co.uk



For people with mental health or psychological problems and in crisis, support is available by phoning NHS 24 on 111, Samaritans on 116 123 or Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87.

The Musculoskeletal (MSK) Helpline is a service for people experiencing MSK disorders such as back pain or sports injuries. Phone **0800 917 9390** (9am to 5pm Mon to Fri). Calls are free.



NHS 24

Call the free national NHS helpline on 111

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