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SHOULDER STRETCHES

RANGE OF MOTION

The most important aspect of your rehabilitation is to decrease pain and swelling so you can stretch and strengthen. A sling might be prescribed to allow the shoulder to rest when you are not actively stretching and exercising. A sling for the shoulder is similar to using crutches for a knee injury- it helps the shoulder rest. **Stretches** and **isometric exercises** (see below) will be performed to regain range of motion and promote muscle activity. These stretches and exercises will usually make the shoulder feel better, but if necessary, take your pain medicine 30 minutes before your session. Ice is also key to keeping the shoulder comfortable and should be used as often as possible. Doing nothing will cause the shoulder to stiffen up and add to your grief, however, overdoing these exercises will not get you back in the action any faster. Slow and steady always wins the rehabilitation race.

PASSIVE STRETCHES

“Passive” means something else causing motion in the shoulder –
In this case, gravity or the opposite arm. All of these stretches can be fairly aggressive.
Your doctor will let you know when you are cleared to begin.

#1- PENDULUM

Purpose: To promote range of motion in all directions.

Starting Position: Bend over at your waist while stabilizing yourself with the uninjured arm. Allow your injured arm to dangle in front of you.

Action: Using your body to create all of the motion, rock your hips in a circular motion to cause your arm to move. Circle clockwise and counter-clockwise. Move side to side and back and forth as well.

Note: Perform for 5-10 minutes at least 4 times daily.



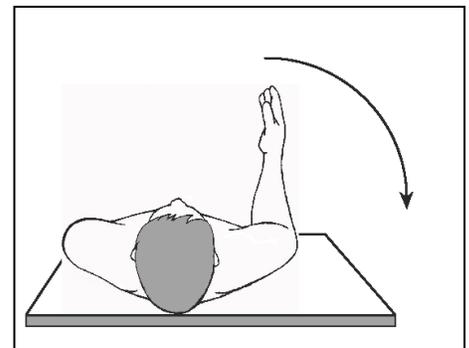
#2- SUPINE EXTERNAL ROTATION

Purpose: Passive external rotation to regain normal motion.

Starting Position: Lying on your back with your injured arm tucked to the side, elbow at 90 degrees.

Action: Push injured hand outwards away from the body using the uninjured hand or a stick.

Note: Perform this 5 times hold each for 30 seconds, 4 times daily. Feel the stretch in your shoulder; don't cheat by moving the elbow or shoulder blade.



WHAT ARE REPS & SETS?

A rep is a repetition of a particular exercise. A set is a group of repetitions. Thus, 3 sets of 5 reps is a total of 15 exercises. The other way to do exercises is by time. For example, do pendulums for 60 seconds followed by 30 seconds of rest and repeat this for a total of 5 minutes. The benefit of doing exercises by time is you do not rush trying to finish a predetermined number of reps. With whatever method you choose, strive to do all exercises slowly, carefully, and deliberately.

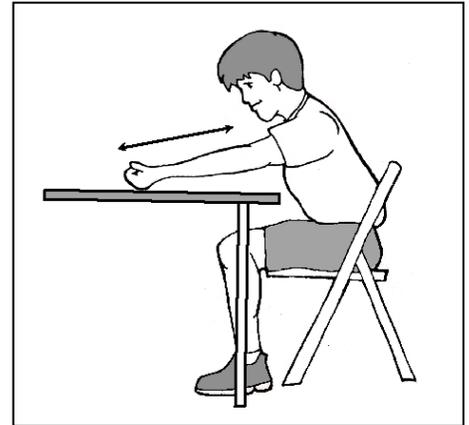
#3- SEATED FLEXION

Purpose: Using gravity and your body weight to get a good stretch.

Starting Position: Sitting with your palm up on a low table in front of you.

Action: Lean forward slowly. Watch TV to distract yourself.

Note: Perform for at least 5 minutes, 4 times daily. Over the course of the 5 minutes, slowly increase the stretch. No quick motions. Easy does it!



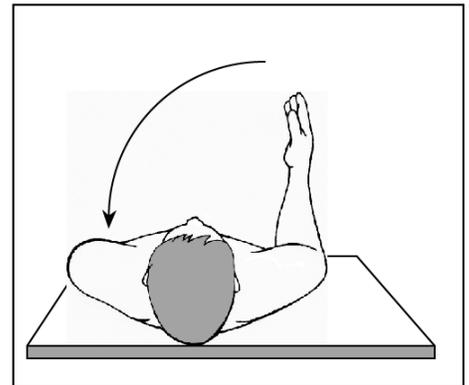
4 – SUPINE INTERNAL ROTATION

Purpose: Assisted internal rotation to further promote full motion.

Starting Position: Leaning or lying back, injured arm tucked into side. Elbow at 90 degrees.

Action: Pull hand inwards toward chest using uninjured arm or stick.

Note: Perform 5, 30 second reps, 4 times daily. This is obviously just the opposite of external rotation. Depending on your injury or surgery, one or the other should be more difficult.



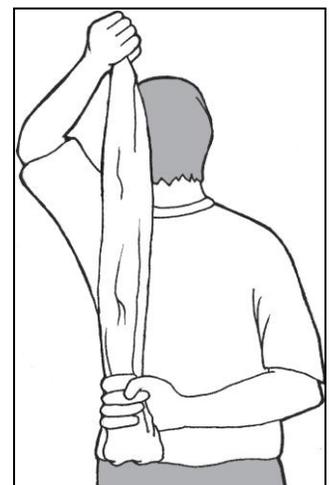
5 – BEHIND BACK (INTERNAL ROTATION)

Purpose: Assisted internal rotation to further promote full motion. This is a more advanced internal rotation stretch.

Starting Position: Stand holding a towel behind your back. Injured elbow bent about 90 degrees.

Action: Use uninjured arm to pull the injured shoulder to your low back.

Note: Perform 5 reps of 30 seconds, 4 times daily. As you loosen up, pull the towel upwards with the uninjured hand, like you're scrubbing your back.



6 – ELBOW & WRIST FLEXION/EXTENSION

Purpose: To maintain range of motion at joints below the shoulder.

Starting Position:

Forearm- the forearm can be placed flat on a table or counter with the wrist/hand hanging off the edge.

Elbow- with arm at side.

Action:

Forearm- actively bend the wrist up and down (flex/extend) and pump your fist (curl & extend fingers)

Elbow- actively bend and straighten the elbow.

Note: Perform 3 sets of 5 reps, 2 times daily. Again, there should be no pain with this activity.

