Shoulder Rehab

Strengthening exercises.

Patient Handouts

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Physiotherapy Service

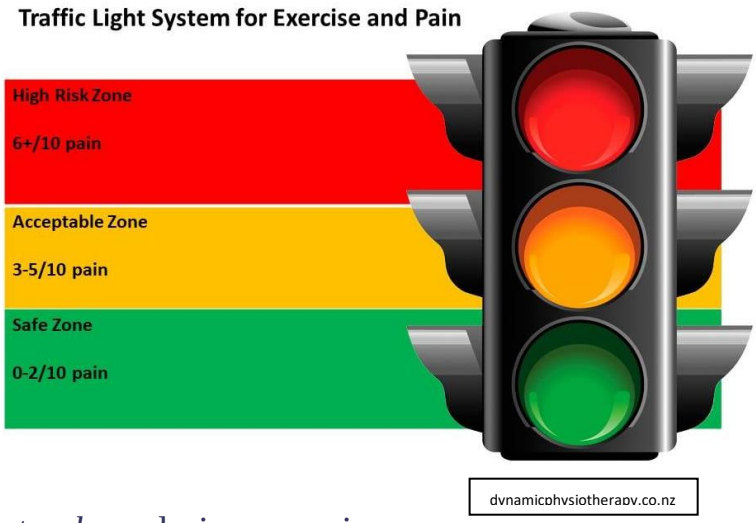
Strengthening exercises

Within this booklet you will find a range of exercises to help strengthen the muscles that support and move your shoulder girdle.

Exercising at the right level with shoulder pain

This simple traffic light system can help you to understand if you're exercising at the right level by letting you see how much pain or discomfort is acceptable.

You should rate your pain out of 10 when exercising, with 0 being no pain & 10 being the worst pain you have ever had.



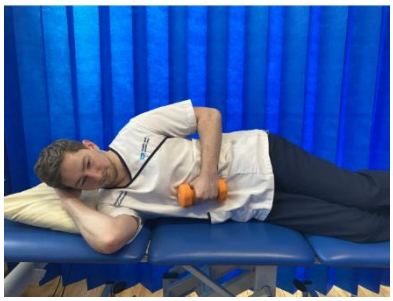
During exercise, aim to keep your pain levels within a rating of 0 to 5. If your pain is above this level, you may be doing your exercises *too intensely*, *too frequently* or for *too long* during a session.

After exercise, your existing shoulder pain shouldn't feel worse overall. However, when initially practising new exercises there may be a short term increase in pain as your body gets used to the movements. This pain should ease quickly and should be no worse on the day after you exercised.

While performing the exercises in this booklet you should set your posture by gently elevating your chest and drawing your shoulder blades back and down towards your bum.

Shoulder lateral rotation

Beginner level ☐



Lying on your side holding an appropriate weight, keep your elbow bent and close to your side. Rotate your shoulder and lift the weight up towards the ceiling.

_____ Reps x _____ Sets

Intermediate level ☐

Holding a theraband in both hands, pull your hands out from each other, keeping your elbows close to your side.

_____ Reps x _____ Sets

Advanced level ☐

Elevate your affected arm out to the side – Holding a theraband in both hands, externally rotate your shoulder.

_____ Reps x _____ Sets

Shoulder abduction

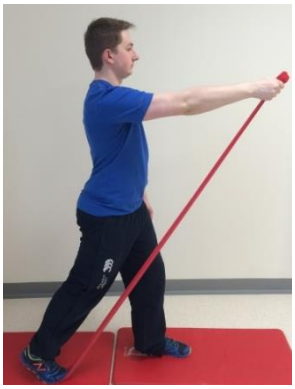
Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐

Holding an appropriate weight or theraband in your affected side, slowly raise your arm to approximately 45-90º with minimal pain. The direction of movement is in a northeast direction for your right shoulder or a northwest direction for your left shoulder.

_____ Reps x _____ Sets

Forward flexion

Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐

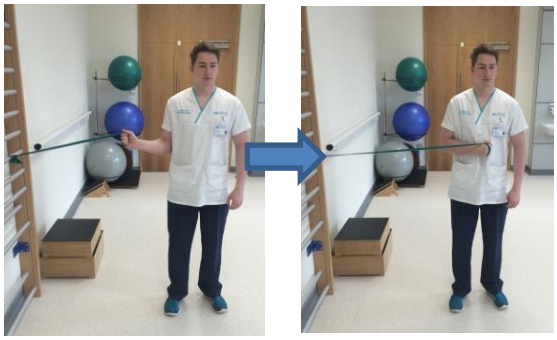


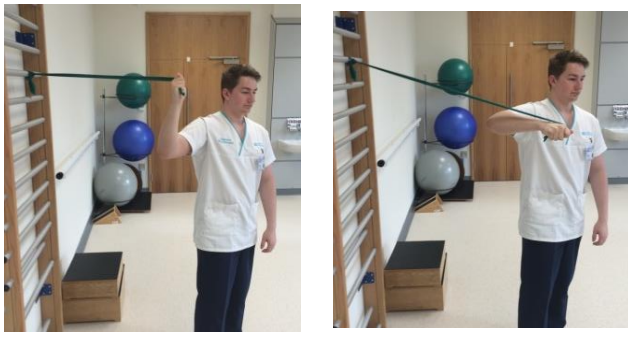
Holding an appropriate weight or theraband – elevate your affected arm forward to approx. 90º.

_____ Reps x _____ Sets

Medial Rotation

Beginner ☐ Advanced ☐

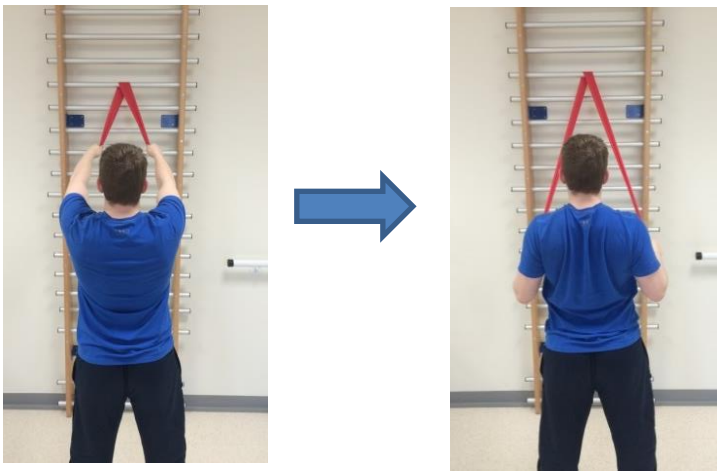




Set your shoulder blade and keep your elbow close to your side. Pull the theraband across your tummy and slowly return to the starting position. _____ Reps x _____ Sets

With your arm elevated out to the side, set your shoulder blade, rotate your hand forward and slowly return to the starting position _____ Reps x _____ Sets

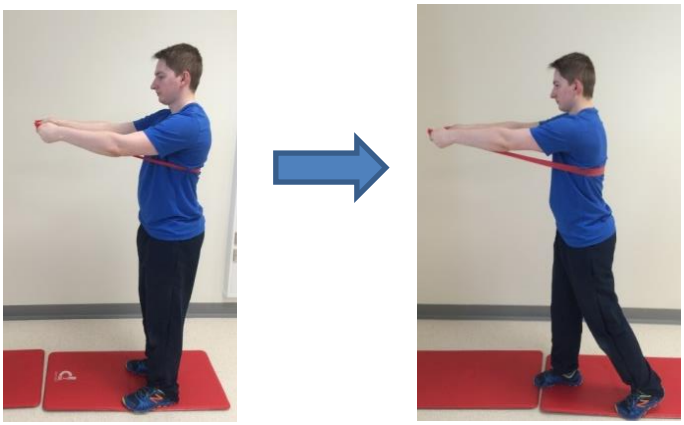
Pull Downs ☐



Holding a theraband which is secured above your head, pull your hands back and down and gently squeeze your shoulder blades back together

____Reps x _____ Sets

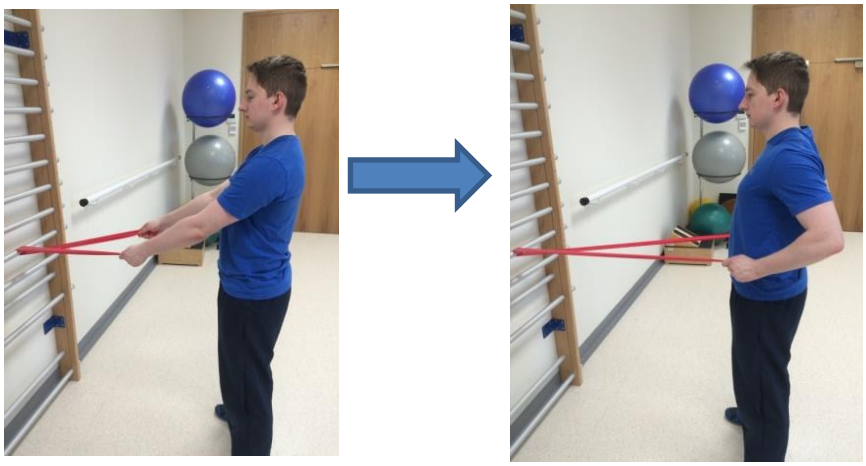
Serratus Anterior Punch ☐



Punch both arms out in front against the resistance of the band

____Reps x _____ Sets

Low Rows ☐



Holding a theraband which is secured at waist level, pull your hands back towards your hips and gently squeeze your shoulder blades back together

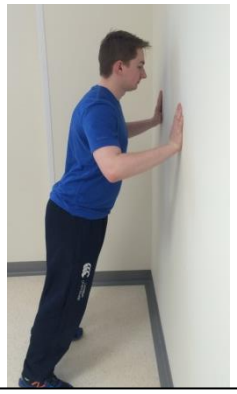
____Reps x _____ Sets

Wall press variations

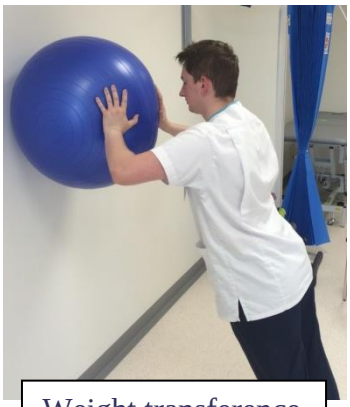
Focus on maintaining good scapular alignment during the following exercises

____Reps x _____ Sets

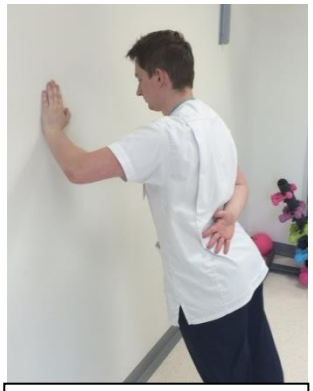
Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐



Weight transference from side to side **or** wall press up



Weight transference **or** wall press up using a gym ball



Single arm press +/- gym ball

Shoulder weight bearing exercises

Attempt to maintain good scapular alignment and stability while in these weight bearing positions

Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advance ☐

Transfer weight gently from side to side

Superman variations i.e. elevate the opposite arm and leg

Using an unsteady base of support i.e. a cushion or a ball.

Useful resources:

SCAN ME

Physiotherapy Service (MSK Outpatient Service) | Northern Health and Social Care Trust (hscni.net)

The information in this booklet is for guidance only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice from a registered Physiotherapist.

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