

Exercise Program for Rotator Cuff Injury

After a rotator cuff injury, performing home exercises can help you regain strength and function in your shoulder.

There are 5 exercises in this program: Pendulum Swings, Wall Walks, Scapular Retraction, Shoulder External Rotations, and Standing Rows.

Start each exercise slowly. A little discomfort is normal, but stop any exercise that causes pain.

Now, let's get started.

To do pendulum swings: Lean over with your good arm supported on a table or chair.

Relax your arm on the injured side, letting it hang straight down.

Slowly move the injured arm in a small circle. Try to move your body so your arm swings passively. Gradually make the circle bigger if you can. Then reverse the direction.

Next, move it backward and forward.

Finally, move it side to side.

Do each arm movement 20 times in each direction.

To do wall walks: Stand facing a wall so your fingers can just touch it.

Slowly walk the fingers of your injured arm up the wall as high as you can without pain.

Hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Then slowly walk your fingers back down.

Repeat 10 times, trying to reach higher each time.

To do scapular retraction: Lie on your stomach on a table or bed with your affected arm hanging over the side. Hold a 1-pound weight in your hand.

Keeping your elbow straight, lift the weight slowly by squeezing your shoulder blade toward the opposite side as far as possible. Then slowly return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

To do shoulder external rotations: Loop a resistance band around a doorknob, holding on to both ends.

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Stand with your unaffected arm facing the doorknob. Hold the resistance band in the hand of your affected arm, with your elbow bent and at your side. Place a rolled hand towel between your elbow and your side.

Squeezing the towel against your side, slowly rotate your arm outward. Then return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

To do standing rows: Loop a resistance band around a doorknob, holding on to both ends.

Stand facing the doorknob. Hold the resistance band in the hand of your affected arm, with your elbow bent and at your side.

Keeping your elbow close to your side, slowly pull your elbow straight back. Then return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

Talk to your healthcare provider or physical therapist about these exercises and others to improve function in your shoulder.