ROTATOR CUFF EXERCISE SHEET

Stretching Exercises

The following stretching exercises can be done to help restore shoulder range of motion. Each stretch can be done to the point of a comfortable feeling of stretch and should be done slowly to allow the muscles and soft tissues time to lengthen. Hold each stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. When stretching, your goal is to reach the maximum range of motion for you. It is recommended that you warm-up well before stretching. Generally, you should do some walking, cycling or jogging so that you break a sweat before you start stretching.

Allow the first one or two repetitions to be warm-up reps, with very little pain. Gradually work into more and more range of motion as you begin to feel more flexible. Mild pain while stretching sometimes occurs, however it is not recommended that you “push through the pain”. If you are patient, the arm will become looser as it warms-up. Do 5 to 10 repetitions, 2 or 3 times a day.

Pendulum exercise
Bend over at the waist and let the arm hang down passively. Using your body to initiate movement, swing the arm gently forward and backward and in a circular motion. Do this pendulum exercise for several minutes, 3 to 5 times per day. Use this exercise as a warm-up activity before stretching.

Supine passive arm elevation
Lie on your back. Hold a cane or stick in both hands, gripping the stick with the hands about 18 inches apart. With the elbows straight and assisting with the opposite arm, lift the cane upward, with the injured arm holding on, as if to bring the hands overhead. Slowly lower the arm back to the bed. The good arm should do as much of the lifting and lowering in this exercise as needed to avoid pain.

Hands Behind the Head Stretch
Lie on your back. Place your hands behind your head as shown in the top picture. Slowly lower the elbows to stretch the shoulder toward the position shown in the bottom picture of figure one. Hold this position for ten seconds, then return to the starting position. Do ten repetitions, two times a day.
Supine cross-chest stretch
Lying on your back, hold the elbow of the injured arm with your opposite hand. Gently stretch the elbow toward the opposite shoulder.

Standing external rotation
Stand with the injured shoulder toward a door as illustrated. While keeping the operated arm firmly against your side and the elbow at a right (90 degree) angle, rotate your body away from the door to produce outward rotation at the shoulder. Hold ten seconds. Do ten repetitions, two times a day.

Behind-the-back internal rotation
Sitting in a chair or standing, place the hand of the injured arm behind your back at the waistline. Use your opposite hand to pull on a towel, as illustrated, to help the other hand higher toward the shoulder blade.

Strengthening exercises
Theraband Strengthening for the shoulder
These resistance exercises should be done very slowly in both directions. The goal is to achieve a maximum amount of strengthening while listening to your end-point of pain. Work within a pain free range of motion at all times and do the exercises very slowly. The slower the motion, the better the muscle contraction is throughout the range of movement. Do all exercises 15 to 20 times each, one to two times a day.
Theraband Strengthening
These resistance exercises should be done very slowly in both directions. Your goal is to achieve a maximum amount of strengthening while listening to your endpoint of pain. Obviously, we want to strengthen you throughout the full range of motion. It is very important that these exercises be done very slowly, not only when you complete the exercise (concentric), but also as you come back to the start position (eccentric). The slower the motion, the more maximal the contraction throughout a full range of motion.

1. External Rotation
Attach the theraband at waist level in a door jamb or other. While standing sideways to the door and looking straight ahead, grasp one end of the band and pull the band all the way through until it is taut. Feet are shoulder width apart and the knees are slightly flexed. The injured elbow is placed next to the side with the injured hand as close to your chest as possible (think of this elbow as being a hinge on a gate). Taking the cord in the injured hand, move the hand away from the body as far as it feels comfortable (at least 90 degrees is our goal), or to where the endpoint of pain limits you. Return to the start position; if you would like, during future repetitions go a few more degrees to work more of a range of motion.

2. Internal Rotation
Attach the Theraband at waist level in a doorjamb or other. While standing sideways to the door and looking straight ahead, grasp one end of the handle and pull the cord all the way through until it is taut. Feet are shoulder width apart and the knees are slightly flexed. The injured elbow is placed next to the side and is flexed at 90 degrees (think of this elbow as being a hinge on a gate). Taking the cord in the injured hand, move the hand toward the chest as far as it feels comfortable, or to where the endpoint of pain limits you. Return to the start position.

3. Shoulder Shrug
Stand on the theraband with your feet at shoulder width apart and. Look straight ahead. Next, straighten up, keeping the knees slightly flexed, with your arms straight down at the sides (palms in). Slowly raise the shoulders in a shrug (toward the ears), then rotate the shoulders backward in a circular motion, and finally down to the original position. This movement is completed while keeping constant tension on the cord.
4. **Seated / Standing Row**
Attach the theraband in a door jamb or other. Sit or stand facing the door. Use a wide flat-footed stance and keep your back straight. Begin with the arms slightly flexed, hands together at waist level in front of your body, thumbs pointing upward, and with the cord taut. You are producing a rowing motion. Pull the cord all the way toward the chest. While pulling the cord, the elbows should be drawn along the side of the body until the hands touch the lower ribs. Always return slowly to the start position.

5. **Standing Forward Punch**
Attach the theraband at waist level in the door jamb. Facing away from the door, stand in a boxing position with one leg ahead of the other (stride position). Do not bend at the waist and remain in an upright position. If the right shoulder is the injured extremity, you will want to grasp the handle in the right hand and step out until the cord is taut. If you use the right hand, the left foot should be forward in the stride position. Begin with your right arm at waist level and bend the elbow at a 90 degree angle, with the elbow remaining near your side. Slowly punch forward while slightly raising the right arm in a forward, upward punching motion. The hand should reach approximately neck level with the right arm almost straight.

6. **Biceps Curls**
Place your feet on the cord, shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent. Keeping your elbows close to the sides of your body, slowly bend the arm at the elbow and curl towards the shoulder. Alternate arms while performing this exercise.