



## **Nonoperative Rehabilitation for Full Thickness Rotator Cuff Tears** **Patient Home Therapy Booklet**

### **Introduction**

The MOON Shoulder group is a Multicenter Orthopaedic Outcomes Network. In other words, it is a group of doctors from around the country working together to do research so they can give patients with shoulder problems the best possible care.

You have been kind enough to be in our rehabilitation study. We are trying to find out why some patients with rotator cuff tears get better with therapy and others do not.

Your doctor, athletic trainer or physical therapist can help guide you through this program which is broken up into three parts:

Range of Motion – you should do this every day to help get your motion back

Flexibility – you should do this every day to help stretch tight tissues.

Strengthening – you should do this 3 or 4 days each week to help get your strength back.

For most of the exercises you will do a certain number of repetitions (or reps) and a certain number of sets.

#### **Example: 3 sets / 10 reps**

**Set 1:** Do the exercise 10 times and then rest for a few seconds

**Set 2:** Do the exercise 10 times and then rest for a few seconds

**Set 3:** Do the exercise 10 times and then rest for a few seconds. Then move onto the next exercise.

**Please do not add, skip or alter any of the exercises without talking to your doctor first.**


### **Video**

At [www.moonshoulder.com](http://www.moonshoulder.com), on the PT protocols page, you will also find a video. The video shows you how to do all of the exercises in this booklet. Some points to remember:

1. The Range of Motion and Flexibility exercises can be done every day, while the strengthening exercises should be done 3 or 4 times per week.
2. With the Range of Motion exercises, it may be easier and less painful to start while lying on your back. When that becomes comfortable, you can do the exercises standing.

3. With strengthening, if you have moderate or severe pain with any of the exercises, you should decrease the resistance, decrease the amount of times you do the exercise or skip the exercise until you can do it without pain.

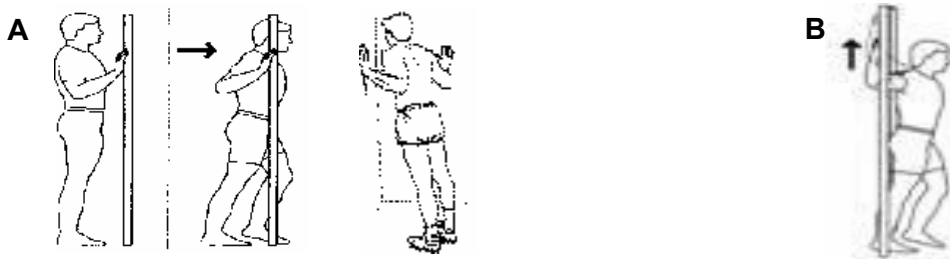
If you have any questions after reading the booklet or watching the video, talk to your doctor, physical therapist, or athletic trainer.

 The red arrows point to the injured shoulder in the pictures where it may not be clear.

**Flexibility**  
**Do these every day**

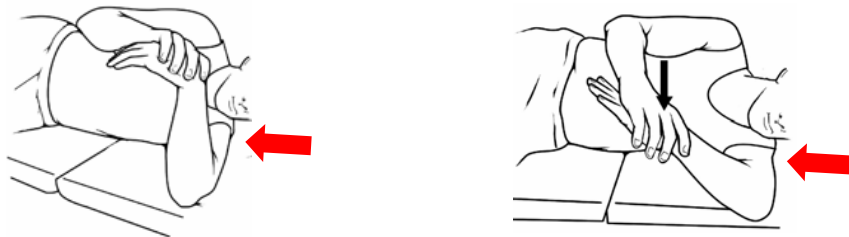
Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and rest for about 10 seconds in between. Repeat five times per day.

**1. Door Stretch**



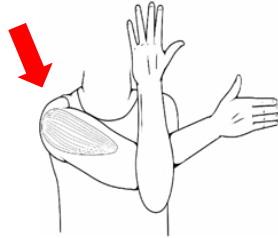
Place your hands or forearms at shoulder level on each side of a door frame or in a corner of a room (A). Lean forward into door or corner and hold. Next place your hands or forearms over your head on each side of the door, lean forward and hold (B).

**2. Sleeper Stretch**



On a flat surface lie on your side with your injured shoulder down. Raise your arm to shoulder height and then bend your elbow. Use your good arm to push your forearm (of the injured shoulder) down towards the floor or bed.

### 3. Golfer Stretch



Bring the injured arm across in front of body. Hold elbow with other arm (see picture). Gently pull your forearm (of your good arm) towards your chest/face which will pull the injured arm across chest until a stretch is felt in the back of shoulder.

### 4. Towel Stretch

Place the hand of your good arm behind your neck and the hand of the injured shoulder by your back pocket. Grab a towel with both hands. Use the good arm to pull upward, bringing the injured arm up the back.



Hold your good arm over shoulder with towel as shown. Grasp the towel with your injured arm. Slowly pull upward with your good arm until a gentle stretch is felt.

**Range of Motion Exercises**  
**Do these every day**

**1. Pendulum exercises**

Move your body and let the movement of your body move your shoulder. Example: Rest your good hand on a table and bend over a little at your waist. Make circles with your hips/body, which will cause your injured arm to make circles. Repeat this by moving your hips/body in different directions. **Do not use your shoulder muscles.** *Do each motion 20 times.*

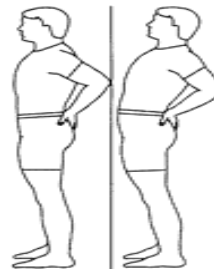


Let the injured arm hang over the side of the table. Make 20 small circles in one direction and then 20 small circles in the other direction. Make forward and backward motions 20 times and then side to side motions 20 times.

**2. Posture exercises**

These exercises should be done within the pain free range. In other words, you should not have any pain while doing these exercises. *Do this exercise 20 times.*

Put your hands on your hips, lean back and hold for 20 seconds.



**3. Active assisted range of motion**

Use a cane/broomstick/pulley system so the good arm moves the injured arm. *Do 3 sets/10 reps for each exercise.*

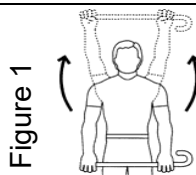


Figure 1

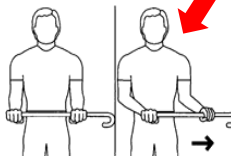


Figure 2

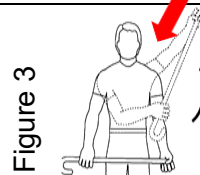


Figure 3

Lying on your back, hold the cane with both hands. Raise your arms using the good arm to help guide the injured arm (Figure 1). Next use the good arm to move the injured arm to the side (Figure 2). Lastly, use the good arm to move the injured arm up to the side and up (Figure 3). You may start to use your injured arm more as it starts to feel more comfortable. Again as you start to feel more comfortable you can also do these standing up.

#### 4. Active training of the scapula muscles

Two exercises are shoulder shrugs and pinching your shoulder blades. *Do 3 sets/10 reps for each exercise.*



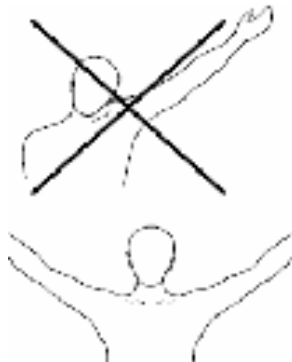
Shoulder Shrugs: Pull shoulders up and back and hold.



Pinch the back of the shoulder blades together using good posture

#### 5. Active range of motion

Raise your injured arm while looking at yourself in the mirror – be sure not to hike or raise your shoulder! You can place your hand (from your good arm) on top of your injured shoulder to make sure the muscles are relaxed. *Do 3 sets/10 reps.*



In front of a mirror, practice raising your arm in front of your body without shrugging your shoulder.

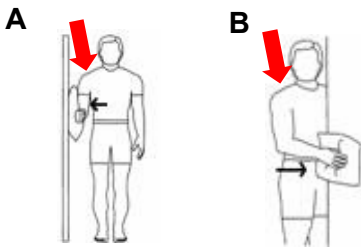
**Strengthening**  
**Do these 3 to 4 times per week**

- Repetitions and/or resistance can be increased as tolerated.
- Be sure to use good form.
- If you have moderate or severe discomfort reduce the level of resistance or decrease the range of the exercise until it is comfortable.

**Rotator Cuff Strengthening**

**1. Isometrics against a wall**

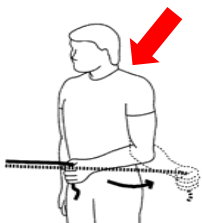
*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*



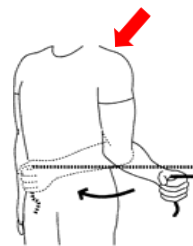
Press the outside of your forearm against a wall (A) for 20 seconds. Relax. Next press the inside of your forearm against a wall (B) for 20 seconds. Relax.

**2. Internal/External Rotation against resistance**

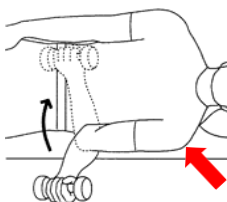
Stand up when using elastic bands or lie on side to use hand weights. If you are using elastic bands, please tie them to a doorknob in order to secure them. Keep the arm against the body. Internally rotate against resistance for internal rotation. Externally rotate against resistance for external rotation. *Do 3 sets/10 reps.*



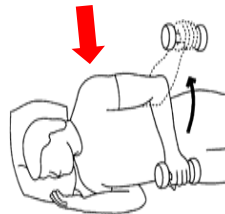
Secure elastic at waist level. Hold elbow at 90 degrees with arm at side. Pull hand away from body as shown.



Secure elastic at waist level. Hold elbow at 90 degrees, arm at side. Pull across body as shown.



Lie on injured side, elbow bent at 90 degrees, arm at side. With or without weight, pull hand towards your belly

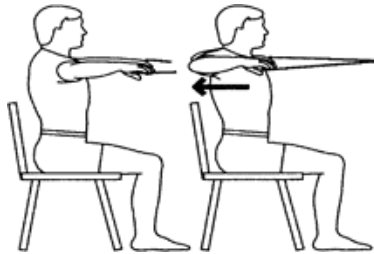


Lie on side, injured side up. Arm at side, elbow bent, with or without weight, move hand away from your belly.

**Postural / Periscapular Muscle Strengthening**

**3. Rows**

*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*



While sitting or standing, bring arms up to shoulder height and bend your elbows. Grab the elastic bands with both hands and try to pull the elastic cords back, pinching your shoulder blades behind you.

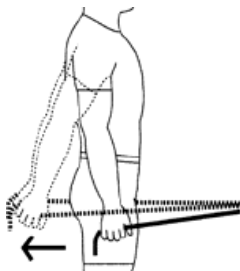
An upright row can be done with a hand weight. (If you do not have hand weights, use a can of soup).

Do one arm at a time. While standing lean over a table. Bend at waist. With your elbow bent raise your arm



**4. Low Trapezius Exercise**

*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*



Stand straight up. Grab the elastic bands with both hands. Keep elbows straight and pull your arms backwards, trying to reach behind you.

**5. Chair Press**

*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*

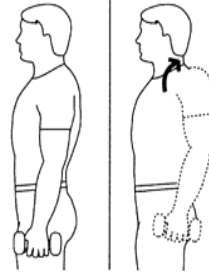
While seated put your hands on the seat or on the arm rests. Then press down with your arms, lifting your body off chair. Try to keep your back straight.



## 6. Shrugs

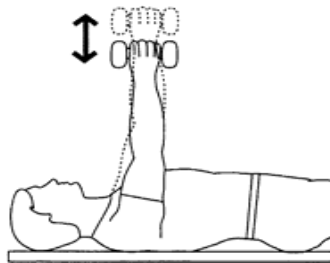
Like the shoulder shrugs (page 5), except this time you use weights. *Do 3 sets/10 reps.*

Stand with weights in hands. Roll shoulders back and hold.



## 7. Press Up

*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*

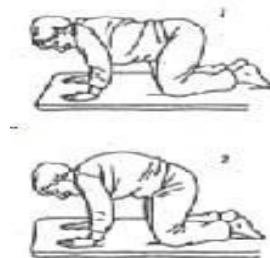


Lie on back, elbow locked straight, arms stretched up towards the ceiling with weights in hands. Move/Push arms up towards the ceiling as far as possible.

## 8. Push Up Plus

*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*

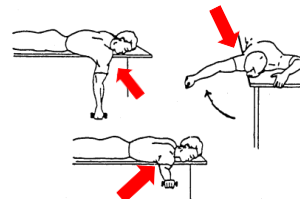
Do a pushup (either on your hands or forearms) and then really push to bring your spine to the ceiling. Kneeling on the floor, place your hands or forearms on the floor. Start by doing a push-up, then round your back. Really push to try to touch your spine to the ceiling.



## 9. Posterior Deltoid

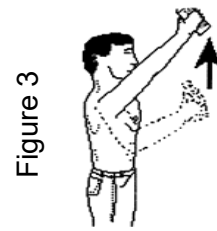
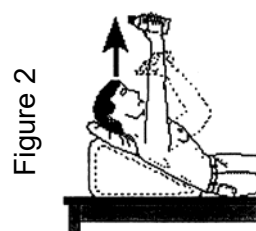
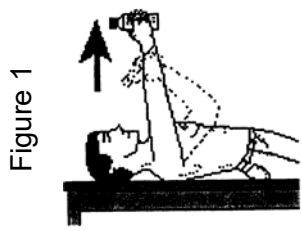
*Do 3 sets/10 reps.*

Lying on your stomach, hang your arm over the side of the bed or couch. While holding a weight, bring the arm out to the side and hold for 20 seconds.



**Jackins' Exercises**  
**Do 3 sets/10 reps for each exercise**

If you have a hard time raising your arm, you should try these Jackins' exercises.



Begin by lying flat on your back (