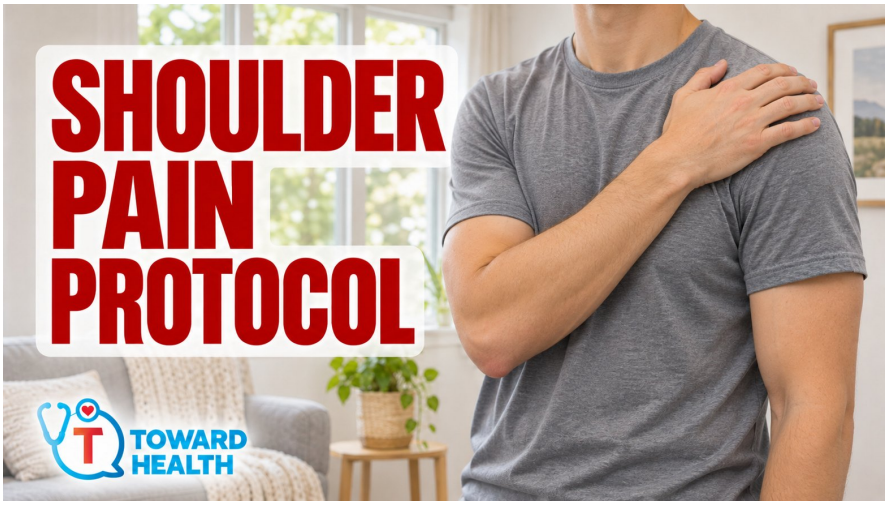
EXERCISE GUIDE & PRACTICE LOG

Before you begin



For adults with gradual shoulder pain after assessment for exercise. Ask your clinician for an individual plan after surgery, a major tear, repeated dislocations or marked stiffness.

Check symptoms first

Emergency care: shoulder pain with chest pain or shortness of breath.

Urgent care: a hot, red or swollen shoulder with fever or feeling very unwell, deformity after injury, sudden major weakness or loss of sensation.

Prompt assessment: difficulty raising the arm or marked new weakness after injury, or worsening numbness or weakness.

Use your response to decide when to advance

After 2-3 comfortable sessions with good control, usual sleep and daily function, and symptoms back to baseline the next morning, increase one thing: range, repetitions or resistance.

If pain appears, ease back. Stop for sharp or catching pain, numbness or sudden weakness. Seek review if symptoms worsen or improvement stalls for 4-6 weeks.

STAGE 1

Start with support

Warm up with 5-10 minutes of easy walking or another comfortable activity.

Supported table slide

Sit at a table with your forearms on towels. Hinge gently at the hips and slide forward until you reach your comfortable limit. Slide back.

Try 5-10 slides. Practice daily if comfortable.



External-rotation hold

Bend your elbow to 90 degrees. Keep a small towel between your elbow and ribs. Gently press the back of your hand outward against a doorframe, holding the arm still.

Try 5 light holds of 10 seconds. Relax between holds.



Choose an everyday goal

Pick one task, such as dressing or placing a cup on a shelf. Record how it feels in the practice log. For strengthening, choose 2-3 days per week with a rest day between.

Movement illustrations of Dr. Tro and Dr. Laura were generated with AI.

STAGE 2

Build control upright

Try light resistance and a supported reach when the starting movements feel comfortable.

Band external rotation

Anchor a light band across your body at elbow height. With a towel at your ribs and your elbow bent, rotate your hand outward. Return slowly and keep your trunk still.

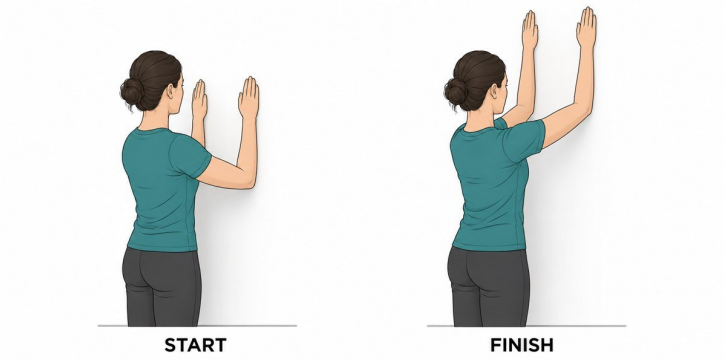
Try 1-2 sets of 8-12 comfortable reps.



Forearm wall slide

Rest both forearms on a wall. Gently slide them upward, letting the shoulder blades travel around your ribs. Keep your ribs steady and lower slowly.

Start with a short, comfortable reach.



Optional incline low I

Lie chest-down on a stable incline with your arms pointing toward your hips. Gently lift them a little, then lower. Start without weights. Try 5-8 smooth reps.

Band exercise illustration of Dr. Laura generated with AI.

STAGE 3

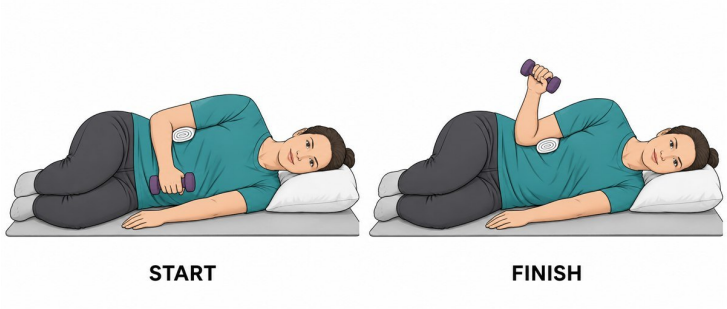
Move to the mat

Use the mat when you can comfortably get down, lie in position and get back up.

Side-lying external rotation

Lie on the other side. Bend your top elbow to 90 degrees and tuck a towel between it and your ribs. Keep the elbow there as you lift your hand, then lower slowly.

Start without a weight. Add a light dumbbell once the motion is easy.



Face-down low I, T and Y

Lie face down on a mat, forehead on a folded towel. Make a small lift in each comfortable position, then lower. Keep your neck relaxed and lower back still.



Incline positions shown. Use the same arm shapes on the mat.

Low I: arms toward hips. T: arms to the sides, thumbs up. Y: arms diagonally overhead, thumbs up. Add Y when reaching overhead feels comfortable.

Try 1 set of 5-8 reps in each comfortable position, without weights.

Incline movement illustration of Dr. Tro generated with AI.

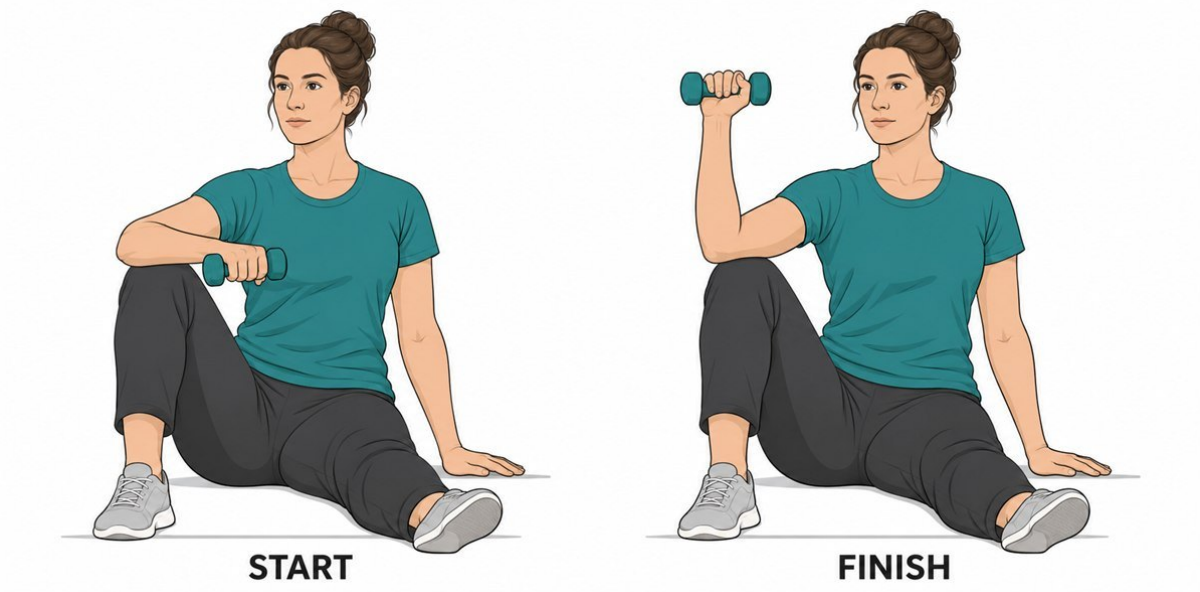
STAGE 4

Add strength for your goal

Choose a drill that matches the activity you want to do.

Soldier rotation

Seated, knee-supported dumbbell external rotation



Sit with one knee raised. Rest the elbow on that knee, bent to 90 degrees. Keeping the elbow supported, rotate the hand upward through a comfortable arc. Lower slowly without leaning back.

Learn the motion empty-handed, then try a very light dumbbell.

Optional wall push-up plus

For pushing goals, place both hands on a wall. Do a shallow wall push-up. At the top, straighten your elbows and gently push the wall away so your shoulder blades glide around your ribs.

Practice your everyday goal. Use the rule on page 1 before increasing the challenge.

SHOULDER PAIN

Track your practice and your response

Name _____ Week of _____

One everyday activity I want to make easier

Examples: getting dressed, comfortable sleep or reaching a shelf.

ENTRY 1 Date _____

Exercise / version | Sets x reps / minutes / resistance

Comfort during exercise | Next morning / sleep / daily task

ENTRY 2 Date _____

Exercise / version | Sets x reps / minutes / resistance

Comfort during exercise | Next morning / sleep / daily task

ENTRY 3 Date _____

Exercise / version | Sets x reps / minutes / resistance

Comfort during exercise | Next morning / sleep / daily task

My next adjustment / clinician notes

Fill in digitally or print. Use one entry per exercise; duplicate this log as needed.

REFERENCES & DEMONSTRATIONS

Explore the guidance

Rotator cuff tendinopathy guideline (2025)

Individualized active exercise for adults with rotator cuff tendinopathy.

GRASP randomized trial (2021)

Exercise, education and self-management for adults with rotator cuff disorders.

AAOS / ASES shoulder conditioning

Illustrated shoulder movements and guidance on gradual resistance.

BESS / BOA shoulder assessment guidance

Warning signs, assessment and referral pathways for shoulder pain.

Watch the movements

Forearm wall slide

Side-lying external rotation (1:22)

Soldier rotation (6:03)

Push-up plus (11:13)

Demonstrations from Squat University. Choose exercises that fit your symptoms, control and goals.