



STRIDES  
— HEALTH GROUP —

Helping people move towards what matters most.

ADULT PHYSIOTHERAPY

# Shoulder pain

A practical guide to easing symptoms and rebuilding comfortable movement.

**Shoulder pain is common.** It can follow an injury or build gradually. Pain does not always mean damage is occurring. A clear plan can help you keep moving and return to what matters.

## 01 UNDERSTAND YOUR SHOULDER

### What may contribute

Rotator cuff related pain, tendon or bursa irritation, stiffness, arthritis, a recent injury or pain referred from the neck can all affect the shoulder. Similar symptoms can have different causes.

### Pain and scan results

Pain does not always mean ongoing damage. Scans are not needed for every episode, and age-related changes can appear in shoulders without pain. Assessment helps decide what matters for you.

## 02 A PRACTICAL PLACE TO START



### Keep moving

Continue comfortable daily movement. Avoid prolonged complete rest where possible.



### Adjust the load

Temporarily modify tasks that cause a strong flare, then build back gradually.



### Build strength gradually

Supported movement or light strengthening may help. Tailor exercise and effort to your symptoms and goals.



### Make sleep easier

Try the other side or your back, with the sore arm supported by a pillow. Adjust for comfort.

## 03 USE SYMPTOMS AS A GUIDE

**A small, short-lived increase can happen.** Reduce range, resistance or repetitions if pain becomes sharp, keeps building or stays substantially worse afterwards.

## 04 HOW PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP



**Start with an individual assessment.** Your physiotherapist considers how symptoms began, shoulder and neck movement, strength and the activities you want to return to.

Your plan may include education, activity adjustments and progressive movement or strengthening, with hands-on care when it may help.

## 05 WHEN TO GET HELP



**Call 000** for shoulder or arm pain with chest tightness, shortness of breath, faintness or other possible emergency symptoms.

**Seek urgent medical advice** after a significant injury, if the shoulder looks deformed or you cannot use the arm, or for a hot, red, swollen shoulder with fever. Arrange a GP or physio review if pain limits sleep or daily tasks, follows an injury, or is not improving after a few weeks.

**A physiotherapist can assess your shoulder, explain what may be contributing and build a plan around your goals.**

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General information only. It does not replace individual assessment or medical advice.