

Shoulder Pain

Information for Patients



This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about shoulder pain and what you can do to help with your recovery.

What is shoulder pain?

Shoulder pain normally relates to the discomfort caused by an irritation of one or more structures within the shoulder region. This could include the joints, soft tissues (muscles, ligaments and tendons) or nerves.

What causes shoulder pain?

Like with most aches and pains in most parts of the body, there are a number of things that might be making your shoulder sore. This could include trauma (a fall or a sports injury), repetitive movements, or doing more or less activity than you're used to. Most shoulder issues are due to soft-tissue (muscles, ligaments and tendons) and despite it being uncomfortable, it is normally nothing to worry about.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: Most shoulder issues will cause discomfort around the shoulder itself, however some people may experience pain travelling down the arm. Discomfort at night is a common finding with most shoulder complaints.

Stiffness: Your neck may feel stiff or tight. This is likely to be linked to increased muscular work around your neck and shoulder blade as your body tries to 'work around' the shoulder issue.

Noises: Clicks, pops, clunks and grinds are very normal in all joints, including your shoulder, and in most cases are nothing to worry about.

Arm feeling weak: Pain is very good at getting in the way of things. With an uncomfortable shoulder/arm, it might be very difficult to do normal things like lifting a bag or a cup of tea.

What can I do to help myself?

Calm it down: Often the best place to start with any painful complaint is to try and calm it down. In a lot of cases there will be things your shoulder likes to do and some that it is less happy to do. Calming it down simply means looking at the things it doesn't like and trying to make some adjustments or changes to make it easier for yourself. For example, you might find that reaching out for something or trying to get your arm in a sleeve can be sore. Not reaching too far (i.e. keeping a

bend in your elbow) or putting the problem arm in the sleeve first may be useful whilst your shoulder is unhappy.

Be kind to yourself: Pain can make you feel vulnerable, drained and sometimes a bit lost. Your body is amazing and can sort most issues out by itself but sometimes it needs some help. By adapting and adjusting things that are sore, you are not giving into the problem but instead, working with it.

Shoulder issues do tend to take a long time to settle. This will vary from person to person, but it is not unusual for shoulder issues to take weeks into months to ease.

Build it back up again: Movement is medicine for your shoulder. Calming the issue down (as described above) is often the best place to start and sometimes this might take a few weeks to help. Once your shoulder feels a little calmer, it is a good idea to start to 'build it back up again'. What this means is that once the shoulder is able to tolerate some gentle exercise, then it is worth starting some.

Will it get better?

For most people, shoulder pain will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about shoulder pain or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'shoulder pain'

Exercises



Standing close to a wall/ door. With your elbow bent, turn your hand away from your stomach so that the back of your wrist touches the wall. Continue to push into the wall. Hold this position for 15- 30 seconds and then relax.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



Standing close to a wall/ door. With your elbow straight and a few inches in front of your leg, push the back of your hand into the wall. Hold this position for 15- 30 seconds and then relax.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



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