

Osteoarthritis of the Shoulder



Information for Patients

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

What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a condition that affects your joints, and it is commonly misunderstood. Osteoarthritis describes the adaptive and useful changes in the way your joint looks and works in order for it to cope with the fact that it is getting older. It is not damage and is not dangerous for you or your joints.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: Osteoarthritis of the shoulder can be particularly uncomfortable. In most cases, it tends to be worse with movement (particularly after a period of rest).

Stiffness: With osteoarthritis of the shoulder, the movement of the shoulder is often limited. Difficulty moving your shoulder is often because of the changes in the joint surfaces and how they work together.

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 things 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 helpful whilst your shoulder is unhappy.

Keep it moving: Try to move your arm as far as you can comfortably as often as you can. You might not be able to do much, but anything is better than nothing.

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 strengthening 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 osteoarthritis'

Exercises



Sitting near a table in front of you with a roller or large bottle under your hand. Lean your top half towards the table and allow your arm to move with/over the roller or bottle. Make sure the arm that is being pushed out does little or no work.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



Standing close to a wall. Walk your fingers up the wall as far as you can comfortably.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille or in a different language, please contact us on **01502 445447**.

Jej šios publikacijos kopija noretumete gauti savo kalba prašome susisiekti su telefono numeriu: **01502 445447**.

Jezeli chcieliby Panstwo otrzymac niniejsza publikacje w tlumaczeniu na jezyk polski, prosimy o kontakt z pod numerem telefonu: **01502 445447**.

Pokud byste chteli kopi této publikace ve Vašem jazyce, prosím kontaktujte ovou na telefonním čísle **01502 445447**.

Bu yayinin kendi dilinizde bir nüshasini isterseniz, lütfen **01502 445447** nolu telefondan ile temasa geçiniz.

Se pretender uma cópia desta publicação no seu idioma, por favor contacte no número **01502 445447**.