

HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM

Shoulder Home Exercise Program

A complete rotator-cuff and shoulder conditioning program — mobility, then strength

This program restores shoulder motion and rebuilds the rotator cuff and shoulder-blade muscles that stabilize the joint — the same staged approach used in physical therapy. Warm up with 5–10 minutes of easy arm movement. Do mobility work daily; add the banded strengthening once motion is comfortable. Every band exercise should be slow and controlled, especially on the way back.

Why slow, eccentric strengthening? Tendons and muscles rebuild when they are loaded slowly while lengthening — the “lowering” phase of an exercise. Take 3–4 seconds on every lowering movement marked **Eccentric**. A mild ache (up to 3–4 out of 10) during and shortly after is acceptable and expected; sharp pain, or soreness that worsens into the next day, means reduce the load. These programs work over 6–12 weeks of consistency.

MOBILITY & STRETCHING

Do these daily to restore comfortable motion before strengthening.



Pendulum Swings

2 sets × 10 each direction, daily

Lean forward with your good arm resting on a table and let the affected arm hang relaxed. Gently swing it in small circles and side to side, letting gravity do the work.



Cross-Body Stretch

4 × 30-sec holds each side, daily

Bring the affected arm straight across your chest and use the other hand to gently pull it closer until you feel a stretch in the back of the shoulder.



Wand External-Rotation Stretch

4 reps each side, daily

Hold a cane or stick with both hands, elbows at your sides. Use the good arm to push the affected forearm outward until you feel a gentle stretch. Keep the elbow tucked in.



Towel Internal-Rotation Stretch

4 reps each side, daily

Hold a towel behind your back. Use the top hand to gently pull the bottom hand up your spine until a comfortable stretch is felt.



Sleeper Stretch

4 reps × 30 sec, 3×/day

Lie on the affected side with that arm out in front and the elbow bent 90°. Use the other hand to gently press the forearm down toward the table.



Table Slide (Forward Flexion)

2–3 sets × 10, daily

Sit at a table with a small towel under your hand. Keeping your back straight, slide the hand forward across the table, leaning your trunk forward to gently raise the arm into forward flexion. Slide back and repeat.



Doorway Pectoralis Stretch

3 × 30-sec holds, daily

Stand in a doorway with your forearms on the frame and elbows at about shoulder height. Step gently forward until you feel a stretch across the front of your chest and shoulders. Hold, breathing easily; do not force it.

SCAPULAR & CUFF STRENGTHENING

Add resistance-band work 3 days per week once motion is comfortable. Move slowly and control the return.



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Scapular Setting

10-sec holds × 10, 3 days/week

Sit or stand tall and draw the shoulder blades together and slightly down, as if pinching a pencil between them. Do not shrug. Hold, then relax.



Prone Horizontal Abduction ("T")

3 sets × 10, 3 days/week

Lie face down with your arm hanging off the edge of a bed or table, thumb pointing up. Raise the arm out to the side to shoulder height to form a "T", squeezing the shoulder blade, then lower slowly. Begin with no weight.



Supine Serratus Punch

3 sets × 12, 3 days/week

Lie on your back with the arm reaching straight up toward the ceiling, holding a light weight. Without bending the elbow, "punch" upward by lifting the shoulder blade off the floor, then lower slowly. Strengthens the serratus anterior.



Standing Row

3 sets × 8, 3 days/week

Anchor a band at waist height. Pull the elbow straight back while squeezing the shoulder blade, then return slowly. Keep the wrist straight.



Band External Rotation ECCENTRIC

3 sets × 8, 3 days/week

Elbow bent 90° and tucked at your side, rotate the forearm outward against the band, then return over 3–4 seconds (the eccentric phase). Keep a rolled towel under the elbow if it helps.



Band Internal Rotation ECCENTRIC

3 sets × 8, 3 days/week

With the band anchored to the side, keep the elbow at your side and pull the forearm across your body, then release slowly.

ADVANCED STRENGTHENING

Progress to these as strength improves. Increase resistance in small steps.



External Rotation at 90°

3 sets × 8, 3 days/week

With the upper arm raised to shoulder height and supported, rotate the forearm upward against the band until level with your head, then lower slowly.



Scaption (Thumbs-Up Raise)

3 sets × 10, 3 days/week

With light weights and thumbs pointing up, raise both arms to shoulder height at a 30° forward angle (like pouring from a can). Lower slowly. Stop at shoulder height.



Wall Slides

2 sets × 10, daily

With forearms on the wall, slide your arms upward as high as comfortable while keeping the shoulder blades down and back. Lower with control.

Stop and call the office at (513) 354-3700 if any exercise causes sharp pain, new swelling, numbness, or symptoms that worsen into the next day. This general program is patient education and does not replace an individualized plan from Dr. Pettit or your physical therapist. If you are recovering from surgery, follow your specific post-operative protocol first.



SCAN FOR THE LATEST VERSION ONLINE

robertpettitmd.com/exercise-programs/shoulder.html

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