

Shoulder Exercises

The two standard exercises that have been taught alongside the Bowen Technique shoulder moves for many years, are still as valid and relevant as they ever were. This is not to say that there aren't many more exercises out there, but that these two are fairly simple to demonstrate and perform, quite easy to remember and very effective if performed regularly and correctly.

When giving any kind of aftercare advice, remember the principles of keeping it simple. I think of myself when it comes to being a client and how much I either listen or take in and however much I believe I will remember, I'm going to forget most of what I've been told before I get home!

The client doesn't need to know what you know, so keep things to a minimum and make it easy for the client to remember and actually do what it is you are asking them to do.

With exercises, demonstrate and then get them to do it with you. This will enable them to feel confident they are doing it right and know how it feels.

Write things down wherever possible, making a note of what you've written. These notes act as reminders for you both.

The information that comes back from a client is often unreliable. They are often going to come back and tell you that they did the exercise every day, when in fact they did it twice. Also that nothing has changed when in fact things have. Keep a good record of how they were presenting and the markers that go with this and you will be able to rely on your information, rather than the sketchy details that clients will offer you.

Exercises, like stretches must *never* be done into pain. The idea is to gently mobilise the tissues and affected areas of the shoulder, not to create more pain or problem. These exercises can also be performed as warm up movements before participating in sport, particularly golf.

Shoulder Circling

The first exercise is a simple arm rotation through 360° range permitting. Starting with the arm hanging to the side, lift the arm forwards and upwards as far as possible.

Try to allow the arm to pass through a complete arc at the top and then begin to reach behind, to allow the arm to come downwards through a full circle.

If the arm cannot reach all the way to the top, allow it to go to a position *before* the point of pain, then come out of the circle. Each circle is done 5 or six times or until any before point of discomfort or aching arises. The circles must then be performed with the other arm.

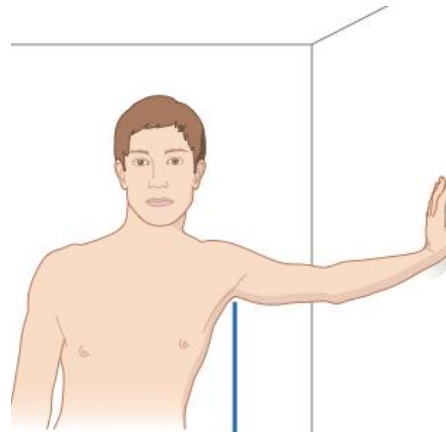
Watch the client perform this and keep an eye on the shoulder to make sure it isn't lifted too soon. The shoulder blade and trapezius area shouldn't be lifting before the arm is at about chest or breast height, as this will limit the range that is possible.

If the client has quite a severe restriction, this exercise can also be done leaning forwards and drawing circles on the floor, as if stirring a big imaginary pot of porridge.

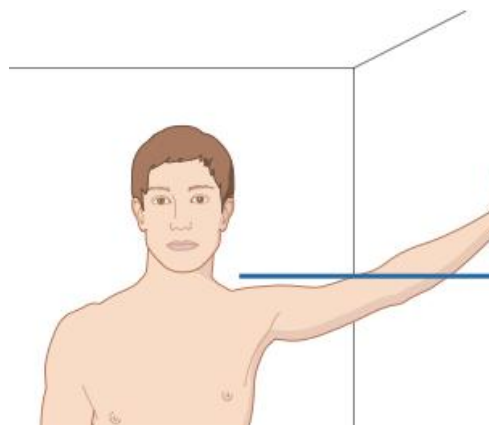
Shoulder Rotations

When and if the client is able to raise their arm to shoulder height, without over engaging the shoulder blade or trapezius, they can perform this movement, which is designed to place gentle pressure on the shoulder capsule and increase movement and strength.

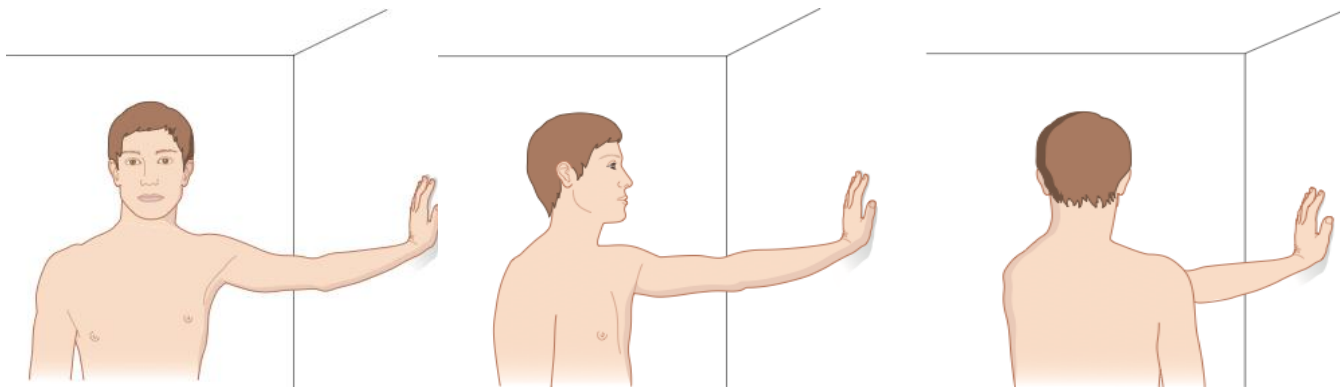
Stand parallel to a wall or door frame and put one hand against the wall. You should be able to push against the wall, but should not be leaning



Incorrect
Here the body is not parallel to the wall



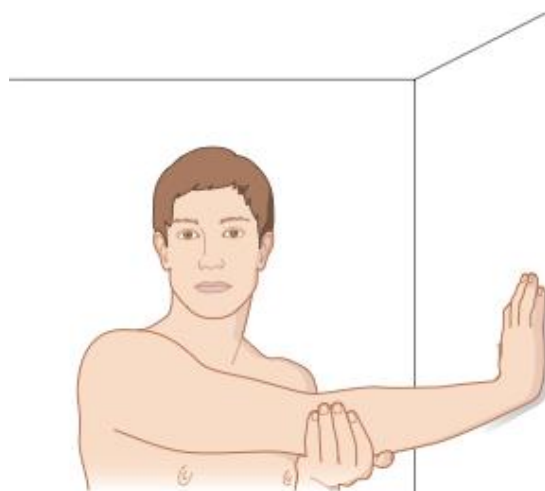
Incorrect
Here the arm is too high and should be perpendicular to the wall



Correct Starting Position

Keeping the arm still and straight, start to walk inwards towards the arm until the arm is against the chest. Again stop if there is any pain or discomfort in the joint or arm.

You can use the opposite hand or wrist to keep the elbow straight and hold the arm in place against the wall.



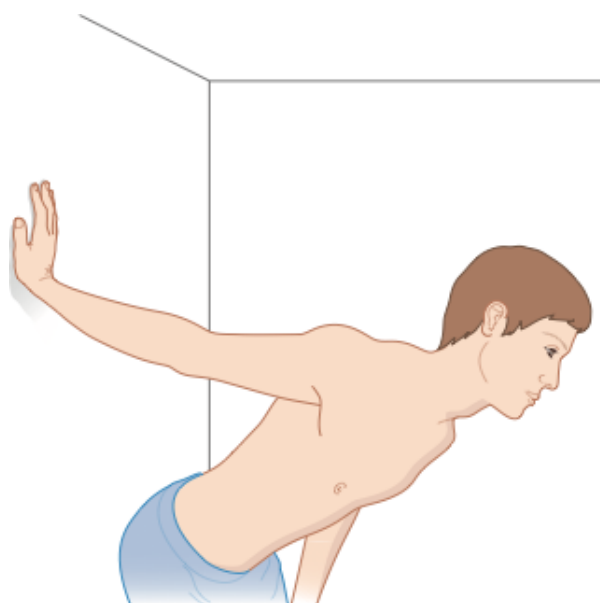
Hold this position for three seconds. Keeping your hand against the wall, walk back in the direction you came from, but keep going.

Eventually you will be facing the opposite way from your hand and the wall.

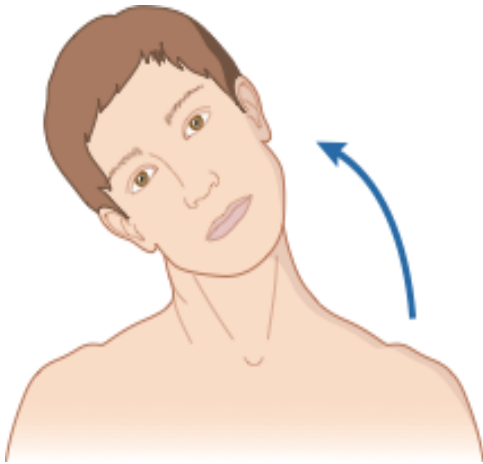
Now bend at the waist and walk slowly backwards, until your bottom reaches the wall, with the arm above you.

Walk forwards to return to the starting point.

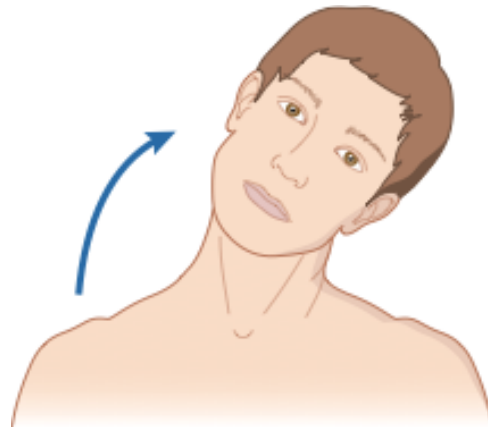
Perform this exercise on ***both shoulders*** six times on one then six on the other, every day, but **ONLY** if there is no pain. You **MUST** stop at the first sign of any pain or discomfort



Shoulders are inextricably linked to the head and neck and a client with poor lateral flexion in the neck as well as restricted shoulder function, will need to address the neck as a major part of getting the shoulders moving.



stretched and moved out very gently just using the head. The head should drop to the shoulders without both sides stretched on a regular basis.



To slightly increase the stretch, reach across the top of the head with the opposite hand and put one finger in the ear. However daft it might seem, this allows the weight of the hand to draw the neck out. The finger in the ear stops the hand from pulling on the head and over stretching.

