



Non-Operative Massive Rotator Cuff Tears – Anterior Deltoid Exercises

As a result of prolonged overuse and wear and tear, the muscles arising from the shoulder blade and attaching to the top of your humerus (arm bone) – the rotator cuff muscles – have become torn. This means you are no longer able to easily lift your arm above 90 degrees.

However, there is another powerful muscle on the outside of your arm – the deltoid muscle – that may be reeducated to compensate for the torn rotator cuff.

The following exercises should be done 3-5 times a day to strengthen your deltoid muscle. It will reduce your pain and improve both the range of motion and your arm function.

These exercises must be done for at least 12 weeks and must always be performed starting lying down to begin with. You will be taught the exercise in therapy and reviewed at 6 and 12 weeks.

Exercises

- **Pendulum:**
 - While standing, bend forward and let your arm dangle free and perform gentle pendulum movement for about 5 minutes. This will help you in relieving pain and free up your muscles around the shoulder.
- **Supine Flexion/Extension**
 - Lie down flat on your back, with a pillow supporting your head.
 - Raise your weak arm to 90 degrees vertical, using the stronger arm to assist if necessary. The elbow should be straight and in line with your ear.
 - Hold your arm in this upright position with its own strength.
 - Slowly, with your fingers, wrist, and elbow straight, move the arm forward and backward in line with the outside of the leg. Keep the movement smooth and continuous for 5 minutes or until fatigue.
- **As you gain confidence in controlling flexion and extension, the progression will go as follows:**
 - Increase amplitude of the exercise attempting to gain 180 degrees of movement.
 - Still laying down, can use light weight, e.g. a can of food or small paperweight, to be held in affected hand.
 - Progress from laying, to sitting, to standing.
 - While sitting and standing, start with gravity only, then progress to a light weight as previously mentioned.



- Keep the movement smooth and continuous for 5 minutes or until fatigue.

Isometric Shoulder Matrix:

- As a general rule, you should not be putting enough force into exercise that you become unbalanced. Using a wall, or doorway, push your affected hand against the wall or doorway. Resistance cue is “attempt to hold the wall up, not knock it over”.
- You should repeat these exercises for 10 repetitions in a session, 3 to 5 sessions per day.
- Stop exercising if your pain increases or you feel unwell.

Isometric Flexion

- Begin in a standing upright position with your elbow bent 90 degrees, and a small towel between your fist and a wall.
- Push your arm directly into the wall holding for 10 seconds, then relax and repeat, 10x.

Isometric Extension

- Begin in a standing upright position with your elbow bent 90 degrees, and a small towel between back of arm and a wall.
- Push your arm directly into the wall holding for 10 seconds, then relax and repeat, 10x.

Isometric Abduction

- Begin in a standing upright position with your elbow bent 90 degrees, and a small towel between outside of arm and a wall.
- Push your arm directly into the wall holding for 10 seconds, then relax and repeat, 10x.

Isometric External Rotation

- Begin in a standing upright position with your elbow bent 90 degrees, and a small towel between back of hand and doorway
- Push your hand directly into the wall holding for 10 seconds, then relax and repeat, 10x .

We will follow up with your progress at 6 and 12 weeks. We expect to see some improvement by that time.