

# Shoulder Injury

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT  
AND MINOR INJURY UNITS

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## What is a soft tissue injury?

You have been seen in A&E today after injuring your shoulder. This has been diagnosed as a soft tissue injury. This means that there is an injury to the muscle, ligament or tendon and that there are no broken bones. It is often caused by over stretching of the soft tissue which is followed by pain, swelling, reduced movement and difficulty weight bearing. **Your pain should ease within 2 weeks and you should recover over approximately a 4 - 6 week period. If you have severe pain or your symptoms haven't improved after 2 weeks, contact your GP.**

### First 24-48h

It is best to **rest** your injured limb as much as possible. You can also use an **ice** pack wrapped in a towel and applied to the swollen area for 20min. This will help reduce the swelling and help with pain

### After 48h

After the first 48h, it is recommended to start gently moving your shoulder to help prevent it from becoming stiff.

### Pain control

Simple pain killers, e.g. paracetamol and ibuprofen are advised to help relieve pain and help reduce swelling. You may find it easier to sleep propped up with pillows. Mild pain can continue for up to 3 months.

### Sick Notes

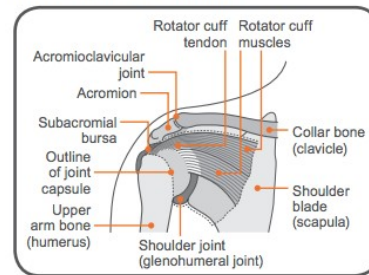
You can self-certify for 7 days from work without a doctor's note. If you are unable to work with your injury beyond this period, this will need discussion with your GP.

### Returning to work/driving/sport

Returning to driving and work will depend on your individual injury, and what your occupation is. It is recommended before returning to driving that you can perform an emergency stop without hesitation and discomfort. As you return to work, you may find that your arm becomes more fatigued as the day goes on. You may wish to rest it in the evening to reduce discomfort.

Return to sport is usually dependent on symptoms and the individual's injury. You should be able to use the limb normally with no pain but a return to racket sports may take a little longer. Return to sport should be with graded return; for example, returning to light activity/training before taking part in a match.

Main features of the shoulder



## Shoulder Exercises

### Pendular swinging

Gently swing your arm backwards and forwards, side to side and in circles, clockwise and anti-clockwise.  
*Repeat 5 times, 2-3x/day.*



### Assisted movement on your back

Lie on your back. Use your good arm to gently help your affected arm, up and towards your head.  
*Repeat 5 - 6 time, 2 - 3x/day*



### Shoulder Stretch

Stand and raise your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Squeeze your shoulder blades back and together and hold for 5 seconds. Pull your shoulder blades downward and hold for 5 seconds.  
*Relax and repeat 10 times, 2 - 3x/ day*



### Physiotherapy

If your shoulder pain is affecting your activity and is persisting, you can ask your GP to refer you to a physiotherapist, or you can refer yourself directly.

To self-refer to physiotherapy, you will need to complete a **self-referral form**, which can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-services/msk-physiotherapy/#> and then **posted** to your local physiotherapy department:

Johnstone Health Centre	60 Quarry Street, Johnstone, PA5 8EY
Renfrew Health & Social Work Centre	10 Ferry Road, Renfrew, PA4 8RU
Royal Alexandra Hospital	Corsebar Road, Paisley, PA2 9PN



You can also download "NHS 24 MSK" App on your phone for exercises and advice. This resource is free of charge.

Or if you do not have a smart phone, the same information can be found online: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/exercises/exercises-for-shoulder-problems>.