BaylorScott&White
ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES OF DALLAS
A member of HealthTexas Provider Network

Manoj P. Reddy, MD
Sports Medicine & Shoulder Surgery
Orthopedic Associates of Dallas
469.800.7200 office | 469.800.7210 fax
DallasOrtho.com | ReddyOrtho.com

Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy / Impingement

HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM

Rotator cuff tendinopathy is irritation of the tendons that help lift and turn the shoulder. Pain usually comes with reaching overhead or behind your back, and at night. Tendons recover with steady, gradually increasing exercise; rest alone usually does not fix the problem.

How to do this program

- Pain rule: mild discomfort up to 3 out of 10 during exercise is okay if it settles by the next morning. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain.
- Move slowly and with control. Breathe normally; do not hold your breath.
- Do Phase 1 every day. Start Phase 2 when you can do Phase 1 with little pain, usually after 1-2 weeks.
- Keep the shoulder blade set down and back during every exercise, and keep band work below shoulder height at first.
- Most people notice clear improvement after 6-12 weeks of steady work.

Phase 1 · Motion and posture (weeks 0-2)

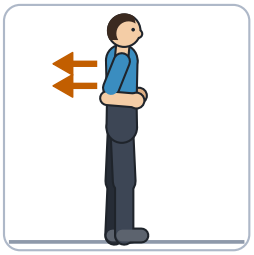
Gentle stretches to loosen the back of the shoulder and settle pain.



1. Pendulum

Lean on a table with your good arm. Let the sore arm hang loose and gently swing it in small circles by rocking your body, not by using your shoulder muscles.

1 minute each direction · 2-3 times a day

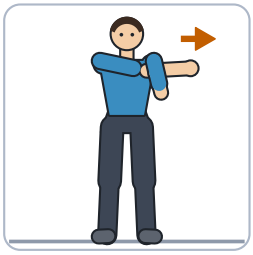


2. Shoulder Blade Squeeze

Stand tall with arms at your sides. Squeeze your shoulder blades down and back without shrugging. Hold 5 seconds.

Make it harder: *Do it with your arms out in a W shape.*

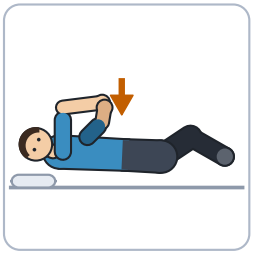
10 reps · 2 times a day



3. Cross-Body Stretch

Bring the arm across your chest. Use the other hand to gently pull it closer at the elbow until you feel a stretch in the back of the shoulder.

Hold 30 sec · 3 reps · 2 times a day



4. Sleeper Stretch

Lie on the sore side with the arm in front at shoulder height and the elbow bent 90°. Use the other hand to gently press the forearm toward the bed.

Hold 30 sec · 3 reps · 1-2 times a day

This program is a guideline. Your doctor or therapist may adjust it based on your condition and progress.
Call the office for fever, wound drainage, calf pain or swelling, or new numbness or tingling.

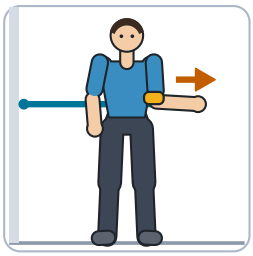
Questions: 469.800.7200
Rev. 10/2026

BaylorScott&White
ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES OF DALLAS
A member of HealthTexas Provider Network

Manoj P. Reddy, MD
Sports Medicine & Shoulder Surgery
Orthopedic Associates of Dallas
469.800.7200 office | 469.800.7210 fax
DallasOrtho.com | ReddyOrtho.com

Phase 2 · Strengthening (weeks 2-12)

Continue the Phase 1 stretches once a day and add these strengthening exercises.

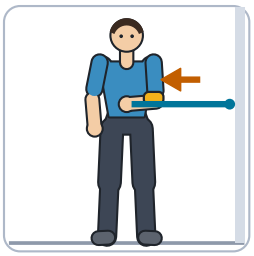


5. Band External Rotation

Elbow at your side with a rolled towel under the arm, elbow bent 90°. Rotate the forearm outward against the band, then return slowly.

Make it harder: *Use the next stronger band color.*

3 sets of 12-15 · once a day

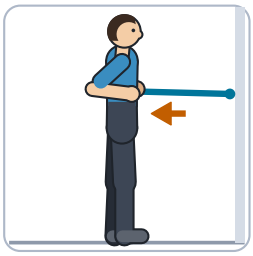


6. Band Internal Rotation

Same position with the band anchored on the other side. Rotate the forearm in toward your stomach, then return slowly.

Make it harder: *Use the next stronger band color.*

3 sets of 12-15 · once a day

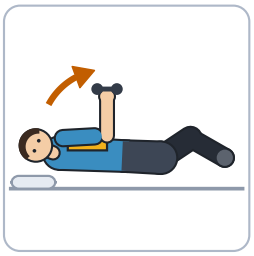


7. Band Row

Hold the band in front of you with arms straight. Pull your elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together, then return slowly.

Make it harder: *Use a stronger band or step farther back.*

3 sets of 12-15 · once a day

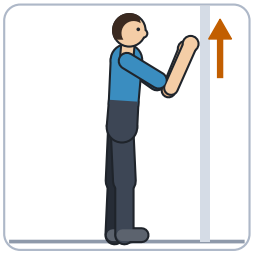


8. Side-Lying External Rotation

Lie on your good side with a towel under the elbow. Keeping the elbow at your side, rotate the forearm up toward the ceiling. Start with 1-2 lb.

Make it harder: *Add 1 lb when 15 reps feel easy.*

3 sets of 12-15 · once a day



9. Wall Slide

Face a wall with forearms on it. Slide your arms up as high as is comfortable, keeping the shoulders down, then slide back.

Make it harder: *Lift the forearms off the wall at the top for 2 seconds.*

2 sets of 10 · once a day

Everyday tips

- Avoid repeated overhead reaching and lifting while symptoms are high.
- Sleep on the other side or on your back with a pillow under the arm.
- Ice for 15 minutes after exercise if sore.

Call the office if

- Pain is getting worse after 4-6 weeks of exercise.
- You have new weakness lifting the arm.
- Night pain keeps you from sleeping despite the exercises.