

Physiotherapy department

# Exercises for patients having radiotherapy to the shoulder and chest wall

## Introduction

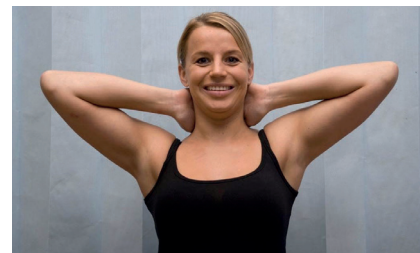
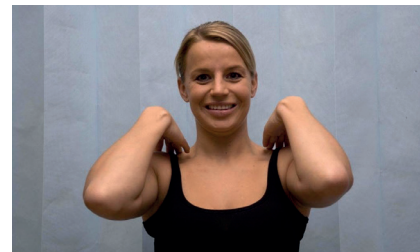
Radiotherapy is an important part of the modern treatment of cancer. Generally, the treatment is effective and safe. However, some patients may develop discomfort or stiffness around the shoulder.

## Shoulder Joint: maintaining your range of movement

**SET A: Warm up exercises** – these exercises should be performed sitting.

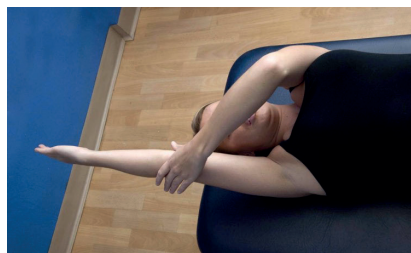
1. Hand on shoulder:  
Lift elbow out to side and down.
2. Hand on shoulder:  
Lift elbow forwards and down.
3. Hands clasped behind neck, and keeping head straight:  
Stretch elbows out to side.
4. Hand behind back:  
Reach up back as far as possible.

- Repeat each exercise **5** times.
- Repeat each set **3 times a day** before performing main stretching exercises on the next page.



## SET B: Stretching exercises – these exercises should be performed lying down.

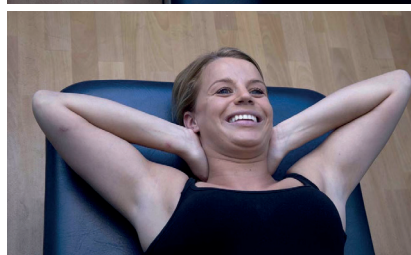
1. Arm by side:  
Lift arm forwards above head, keeping elbow straight.  
Give a gentle push with the other arm to gain extra movement.



2. Arm by side:  
Lift arm out to side and continue upwards towards head.



3. Hands behind neck:  
Lower elbows until they reach the bed.



- For each exercise **hold position for a count of 20**.
- Repeat each exercise **10** times.
- Repeat each set **3 times a day** until eight weeks after the completion of radiotherapy.

If, after 8 weeks you experience pain, stiffness and / or swelling in your hand or arm please contact the physiotherapy department for advice: **Tel: 0161 446 3795**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week