# The ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

## Arm exercises for lymphoedema treatment

#### 1. Shoulder shrugs

- Think about your posture during this exercise. Imagine you are lengthening through your spine, keeping your chin tucked in and shoulders back.
- You can do this sitting or standing upright.
- Shrug your shoulders and return to the start position.
- Repeat 5-10 times.

#### 2. Shoulder rolls

- Sitting or standing upright, roll your shoulders backwards 5-10 times.
- Change direction.
- Roll your shoulders forwards 5-10 times.

#### 3. Hand and wrist

- Open and close your hand by making a fist and then spread your fingers out as far as possible. Repeat 5-10 times.
- To make the exercise more difficult you can squeeze a soft ball.
- Exercise your wrist alternating between flexing (bending) it towards the floor and then extending (lifting) it upwards towards the ceiling with or without the support of a table.
- Repeat 5-10 times.

#### 4. Swimming with arms/breaststroke

- Standing or sitting upright with your shoulders relaxed.
- Complete gentle breaststroke motions by bringing both arms in front of you at chest height and then in circular motions out to the side and back to the body with your palms facing down.
- Repeat 5-10 times.



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### 5. Raising your arm forwards Raise your arm forward and up towards the ceiling, leading with thumb, as far as feels comfortable. If your arm feels too heavy, try this exercise with your elbow bent and your hand resting on your shoulder. Repeat 5-10 times. 6. Lifting your arm out to the side Lift your arm out to the side, leading with your thumb, as far as is comfortable. If your arm feels too heavy, try this exercise with your elbow bent and your hand resting on your shoulder. Repeat 5-10 times. 7. Passing a ball round your body Holding on to a ball, or other small object, pass it around your body behind your back to your other hand and then to the front of your body. Repeat 5 times and then change direction. 8. Wall press Standing in front of a wall, place your hands at shoulder height against the wall. Bend your elbows moving you closer to the wall and then straighten them again. Ensure you keep your back straight during this exercise. Repeat 5-10 times. To make this exercise harder, you can move your feet further away from the wall. Images courtesy of ©ExorLive.com **Contact details** If you have any further questions, please contact the Lymphoedema Service:



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