

## Introduction

Employees often complain of shoulder, elbow or wrist pain. Whether it has been caused by work, or by outside activities, symptoms can be exacerbated by the work that you do. Factors that can cause or impact existing upper limb pain include heavy lifting, poor posture, repetitive and/or forceful movements or poor ergonomics.

It is more prevalent in certain types of work including:

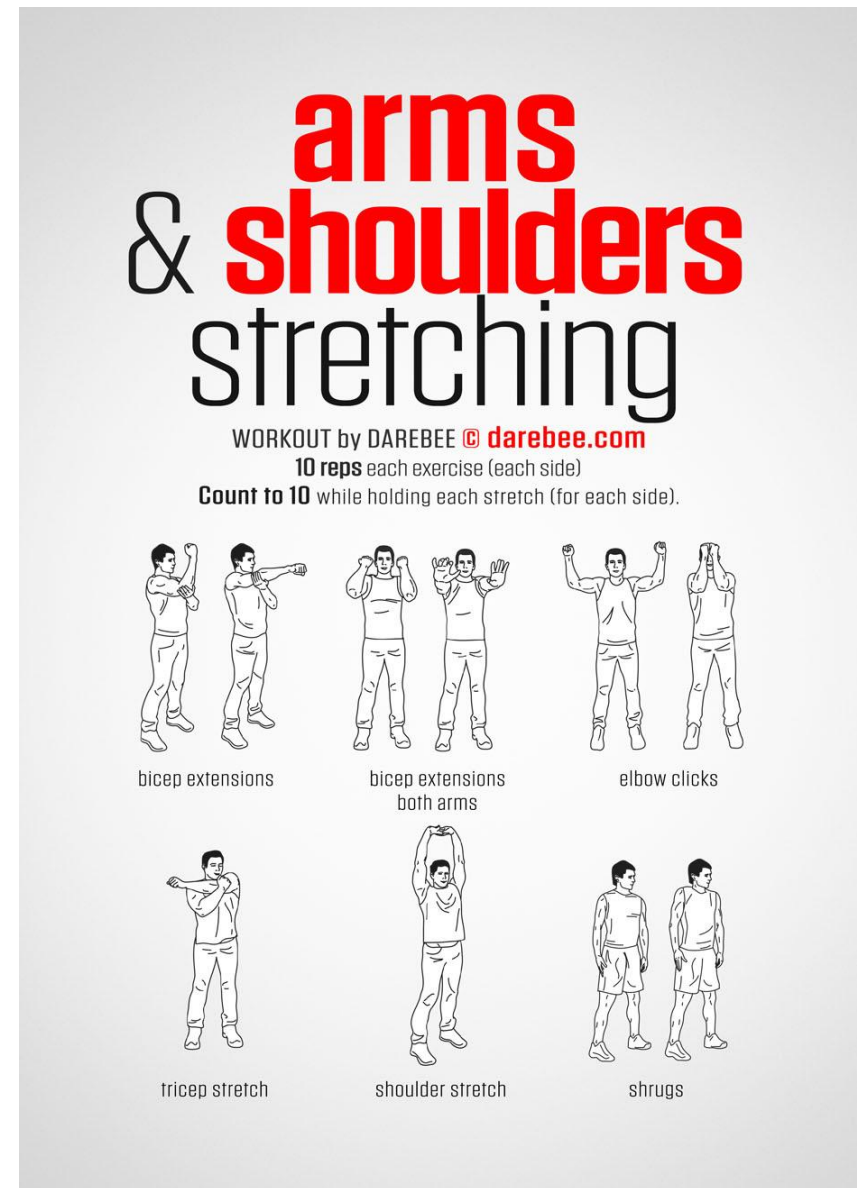
- Display Screen Use & Office Work
- Forklift Driving
- Assembly work and repetitive jobs
- Work involving heavy lifting
- Work involving forceful manipulation
- Some work involving Hand Transmitted Vibration

## What can I do?

Try to identify what factors seem to cause or irritate symptoms. Certain movements or tasks will probably cause more discomfort than others.

- Try to avoid work that involves forceful or repetitive movement and employ job rotation when undertaken.
- Simple exercises could help to alleviate symptoms if undertaken before starting work & after breaks.
- Researching targeted exercises for specific musculoskeletal conditions can help with recovery.
- Consider asking your employer for training or an ergonomic review of your work or process.
- Over-the-counter medication might help with short term symptoms – consult your local pharmacist.

## Simple Exercises for easing back pain



## What if it doesn't improve or gets worse?

If self-care doesn't help or your symptoms are getting worse, then you should consider:

- Stopping self-care exercises if it seems to be making your condition more painful.
- Reporting it to your employer and/or Occupational Health Practitioner.
- Requesting a temporary redeployment to another role or area as a short-term measure (this might not be possible).
- Seeking review with your GP or a Physiotherapist.

If you have been given an exercise or treatment programme by a healthcare professional, you should follow it closely for the time frame specified. Ensure that you follow Manual Handling & DSE Training guidance.

You may be asked to keep a symptom diary to help the practitioner identify which aspects of your job may be affecting your condition. You may be asked to record pain using a simple scale along with other factors such as weights lifted, frequency of movement, force applied etc.

In the unlikely instance that an exercise programme seems to be making things worse, stop and contact your provider for further advice.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/elbow-and-arm-pain/>

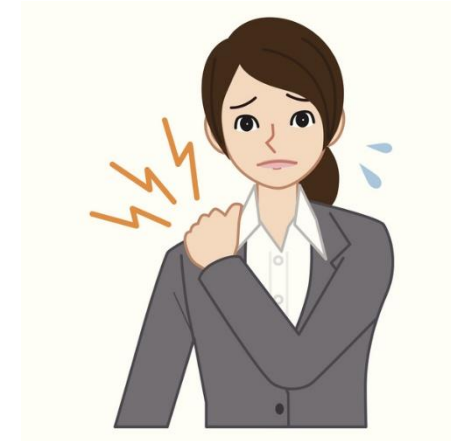
<https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/shoulder-pain/>

A copy of this and associated leaflets may be downloaded from:

<https://mohs.co.uk/resources/>

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## Upper Limb Pain & Work A Guide for Employees



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