LRS PHYSIOTHERAPY

NECK & SHOULDER MOBILITY GUIDE

Three short routines to help you move more comfortably, ease feelings of stiffness and keep your neck, shoulders and upper back moving.

Simple movement. A little strength. No fancy equipment needed for most exercises.

By Liam Swain | Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist

ABOUT ME

My name is Liam Swain and I am a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist with a passion for helping people move better, feel stronger, and perform at their best. I specialise in treating back, neck and joint pain, as well as sports injuries, not just to get people out of pain, but to help them move and perform better long term.

I studied Physiotherapy at the University of Brighton and graduated in 2012 with a First-Class Honours degree. During and after my studies, I gained extensive experience across the NHS and in private clinic settings, working with a wide range of conditions and people from all walks of life.

After qualifying, I progressed within the NHS and moved into a leading private hospital where I became a specialist in musculoskeletal physiotherapy and later moved into a managerial role. During this time, I founded LRS Physiotherapy to help people move, feel and perform better, whether that be returning to sport, improving gym performance, or simply getting back to pain free everyday life.

Today, I work with runners, weightlifters, athletes, weekend warriors, and people who want to stay active and pain-free. I'm genuinely passionate about improving movement and helping people feel confident in their bodies again.

Personally, I'm a keen runner and have completed major marathons including London and Berlin. Like many of you, I've also had my fair share of injuries. Being on the other side of the treatment couch has helped shape the physio I am today, because I understand both the physical and mental frustration that comes with being unable to do what you love.

My aim is simple: to help people move and feel better so they can perform at their best, whether that's lifting their kids off the floor, running a marathon, or hitting a gym PB.

A LITTLE MOVEMENT GOES A LONG WAY

Ever get to the end of the day and feel like your neck and shoulders have seized up? Perhaps you've been sitting, driving, looking at your phone or simply not moving about as much as usual. I hear this all the time in clinic.

This guide gives you three short sessions to rotate through the week. You don't need to do all three every day. Pick a routine, take your time and try to make regular movement part of your week.

What is actually moving?

Your cervical spine is the seven vertebrae in your neck. Muscles including the upper trapezius and levator scapulae help move and support your neck and shoulder blades. Below this sits your thoracic spine, the upper and mid-back, which works together with your shoulders when you reach, turn and lift.

Why do I feel stiff?

There isn't one cause. Spending ages in the same position, stress, muscle fatigue and doing more or less activity than usual can all play a part. There's no single perfect posture you need to hold all day. Often, changing position and moving regularly is more helpful than trying to sit bolt upright.

Before you begin

This is general exercise advice, not a diagnosis or a treatment plan for a specific condition. If you have an existing neck, shoulder or spinal condition, recent injury or surgery, or have been advised to limit movement, speak to an appropriate healthcare professional before starting. Seek urgent medical advice for severe new symptoms such as significant weakness, problems with balance, or a sudden severe headache with neck pain.

SESSION 1

NECK & SHOULDER CONTROL

A gentle combination of stretching, shoulder-blade strength and upper-back rotation. Aim for smooth, comfortable movements.

EXERCISE	SETS / REPS	HOW TO DO IT + VIDEO
Levator scapulae stretch	2 × 20 sec each side	Turn your head slightly and look down towards your armpit until you feel a gentle stretch at the back/side of your neck. **Watch demonstration ↗**
Scapula T	2 × 10	Lie face-down with your arms out in a T shape. Gently lift your arms and squeeze between your shoulder blades, keeping your neck relaxed. **Watch demonstration ↗**
Half-kneeling thoracic rotation	1 × 8 each side	In a supported half-kneeling lunge, rotate your upper body towards the front leg, then return slowly. **Watch demonstration ↗**

Make it work for you

If kneeling is uncomfortable or getting down to the floor is tricky, leave out the half-kneeling movement and try a comfortable seated upper-body rotation instead.

SESSION 2

UPPER-BACK MOBILITY

A little rotation, shoulder movement and gentle movement through the spine. There's no need to push to your absolute limit.

EXERCISE	SETS / REPS	HOW TO DO IT + VIDEO
Open Book Thoracic Rotation	1 × 10 each side	Lie on your side with knees comfortably supported. Open your top arm and turn your chest gently towards the other side. **Watch demonstration ↗**
Wall Angel	2 × 10	Stand against a wall and slowly slide your arms upwards and back down within a comfortable range. **Watch demonstration ↗**
Cat Camel	2 × 10	On hands and knees, gently round your back, then reverse the movement. Keep it slow and flowing. **Watch demonstration ↗**

Make it work for you

For Cat Camel, place a folded towel under your knees if helpful. If you cannot comfortably kneel, skip this one and keep the other two exercises.

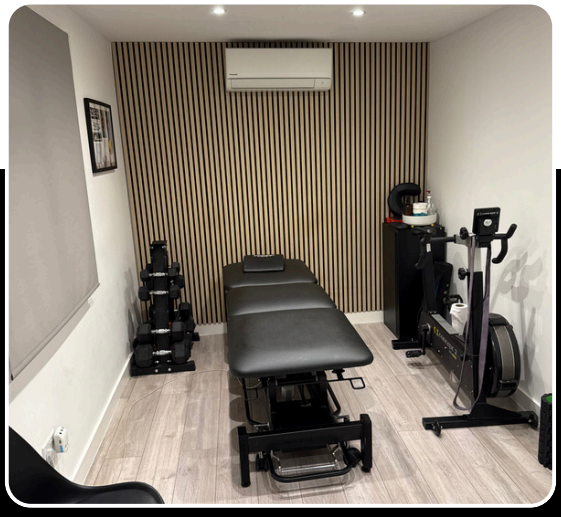
SESSION 3 STRETCH & MOVE

Finish the rotation with a gentle upper-back stretch and some active shoulder movement.

EXERCISE	SETS / REPS	HOW TO DO IT + VIDEO
Thoracic Prayer Stretch	2 × 20 sec	With your elbows supported on a sturdy bench or chair, gently lower your chest until you feel a stretch around your upper back and shoulders. **Watch demonstration ↗**
4 Point Kneel Rotation	1 × 8 each side	On hands and knees, put one hand behind your head and gently rotate your elbow up, then back down. **Watch demonstration ↗**
Band Pull Over	2 × 10	Use a light resistance band and move your arms through a comfortable overhead range with control. Follow the video for set-up. **Watch demonstration ↗**

Make it work for you

Use a light band for the pull-over. If you do not have one, just complete the two mobility exercises. Avoid forcing any overhead movement.



WHAT SHOULD I FEEL?

During your session

A bit of stretching, mild effort or an ache through muscles you haven't used much is generally fine. Sharp, shooting or increasing pain isn't the goal. Ease back, try a smaller range, or leave that exercise out. Stop if you develop dizziness, pins and needles, numbness or unusual symptoms.

Afterwards

You might feel a little freer straight away, or you might not notice much at first. Some mild muscular soreness can happen when movements are new. If symptoms worsen significantly, do not settle, or feel unusual, stop and speak to a healthcare professional.

How often?

Try rotating Session 1, Session 2 and Session 3 through your week. Three or four short sessions is a perfectly good starting point, and you can do more if it feels comfortable. Consistency matters more than forcing a stretch.

NEED A MORE PERSONAL PLAN?

I hope this guide helps you get a bit more movement into your day. These exercises are general, though, and everyone's needs are different. If your neck or shoulders are regularly bothering you, or you'd like a plan built around your goals, get in touch.

The role of a physiotherapist is to reduce pain and help people recover from injury. But for me, it goes beyond that.

My role is to support every aspect of a person's recovery, helping to improve movement, mobility and mindset.

Whether that's returning to high-level sport or simply being able to walk up the stairs comfortably, my motivation remains the same: to help you get back to doing the things you love, moving better, feeling stronger and with less pain.

At LRS Physiotherapy, I offer a range of treatments including manual therapy, joint manipulation, acupuncture, soft tissue release, sports massage, cupping, shockwave therapy and tailored rehabilitation programmes.

Need some help?

Whether you're struggling with an injury, dealing with ongoing aches and pains or simply want to move and feel better, I'd love to help. Get in touch using the links below.

07789172419

Info@lrsphysiotherapy.com

BOOK HERE