Self Range-of-Motion Exercises

Name ________________________________________  Date ________________

Therapist ________________________________  Phone number ______________

Purpose

Range-of-motion exercises will reduce pain swelling, tightness and stiffness. They make it easier to wash and dress the arm. They also help to keep or increase blood flow in the arm.

It is important to move all joints through their full range of motion. If you cannot use your muscles to move one arm, you may use the stronger arm to help with movement.

Instructions

• Sit up straight in a firm chair to support your back. Keep your feet flat on the floor.

• Start with shoulder exercises. If directed, move on to arm and then hand exercises.

• Work hard, but stay within your level of comfort. You should feel a mild stretch. Exercises should not cause sharp pain. If you have pain, stop or limit the exercise.

• Move slowly and gently. Stretch only as far as the body would normally move.

• Breathe out when you stretch. Breathe in when in the resting position. Do not hold your breath.

• For tight arms: Move the arm slowly. Hold the stretch for 5 to 10 seconds or longer.

• For loose arms: Be sure to support the arm. Do not over-stretch.

• Shoulders: You may hurt your shoulder if you move it the wrong way. Follow your therapist’s guidelines.

Do these exercises: ______________________
___________________________

Special instructions: ______________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________
☐ Side-to-side stretch

Use your strong arm to cradle the other arm. Raise your arms to chest height. Move your arms from side to side as far as you can go. Repeat ______ times.

☐ Elbow stretch

Clasp your hands together. Bring your hands to one shoulder. Return hands to your lap. Then, bring your hands to the other shoulder. Return hands to your lap. Repeat ______ times.
☐ Forearm stretch

With elbows at your sides, clasp your hands. Touch the backs of your hands to your lap: first your right hand, then your left. Repeat ______ times.

☐ Wrist stretch

Use your strong hand to grasp your other hand. Bend the wrist up and down. Repeat ______ times.

continued
☐ **Finger stretch**

Use your strong hand to hold your other hand. Bend your fingers into the palm. Fully straighten your fingers. Repeat ______ times.

☐ **Thumb bends**

Use your strong hand to hold your thumb. Bend the thumb toward the base of the little finger. Then, move the thumb to the side (in the “hitchhiker position”). Repeat ______ times.

☐ **Thumb circles**

Use your strong hand to hold your thumb. Slowly move the thumb in a large circle. Repeat ______ times.