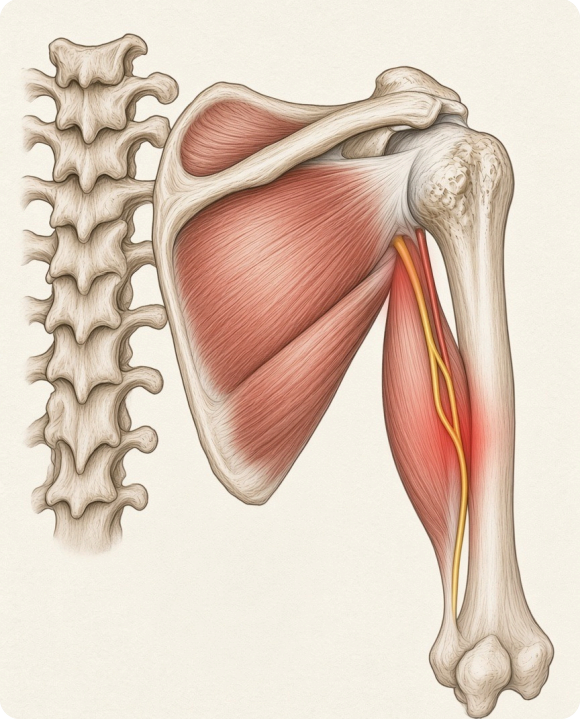
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PATIENT GUIDE

Triangular Interval Syndrome

Pain behind your shoulder that shoots down your arm? It could be **triangular interval syndrome.**

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Physiotherapist · arminphysio.com

What is triangular interval syndrome?

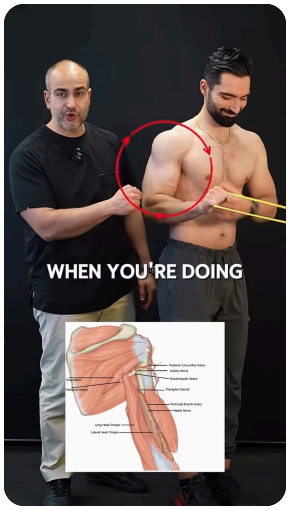
Triangular interval syndrome is a rare condition where the **radial nerve** becomes compressed as it passes through a space between the muscles at the back of your shoulder. The space sits just below the teres major muscle, between the long head of the triceps and the upper arm bone. Improving shoulder mobility, muscle strength and nerve mobility may help reduce irritation and restore normal function.

QUICK CHECK

Does this sound like you?

- ☐ Pain **behind the shoulder** shooting **down the arm**
- ☐ Pain or weakness in your **triceps** when you **straighten the elbow**
- ☐ **Pressing the back of the shoulder** brings on your symptoms
- ☐ **Tingling, numbness or burning** down the back of the arm
- ☐ Weakness straightening the **wrist or fingers**

If you ticked a few boxes, this could be the cause. Try the 3 exercises on the next pages.



Pain or weakness straightening the elbow



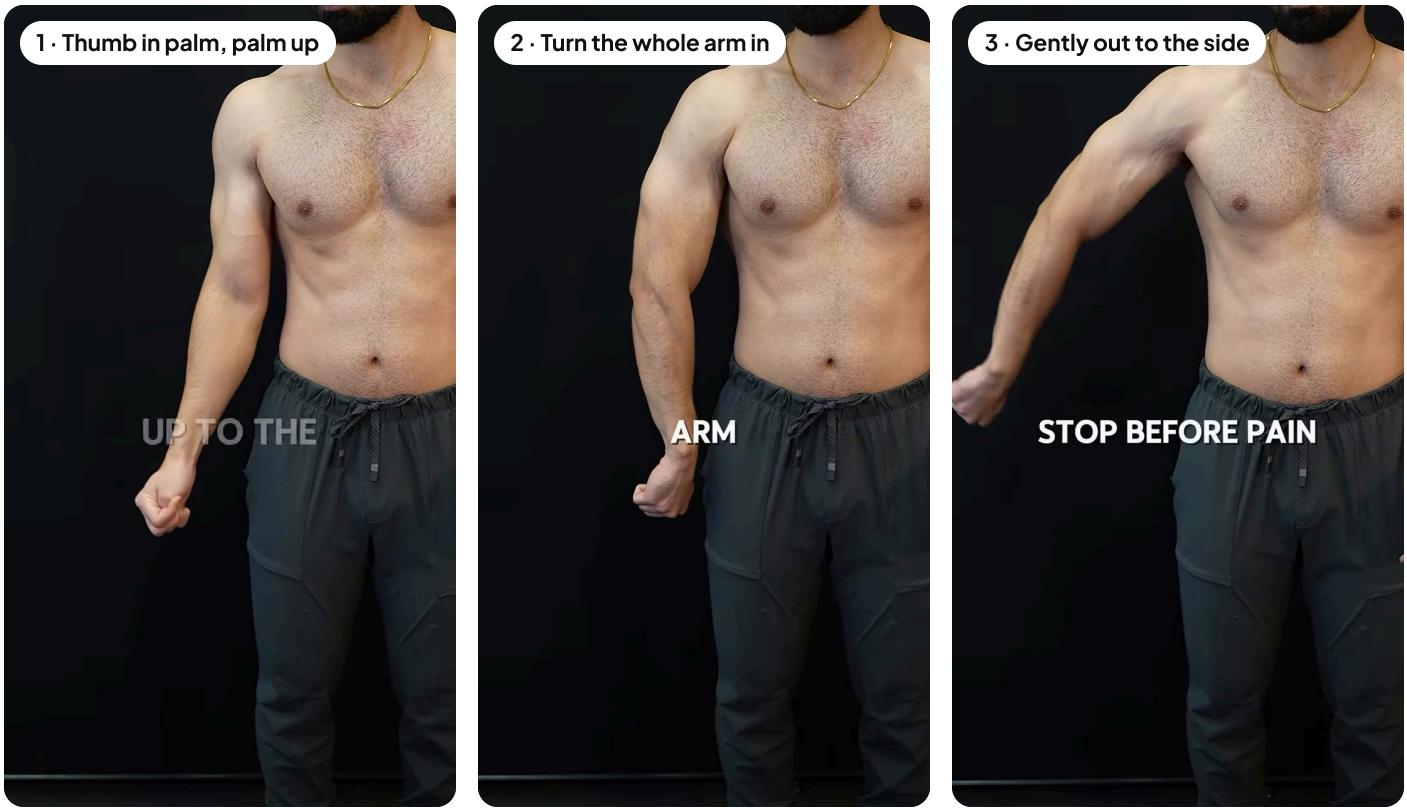
Pressing here reproduces symptoms

YOUR 3 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Radial nerve glide

Gently mobilizes the trapped radial nerve



1. **Place your thumb in the palm of your hand.**
2. **Bring your hand by your side**, with your palm facing up to the ceiling.
3. From here, **internally rotate the shoulder and the whole arm.**
4. **Gently bring it out to your side.** Stop before pain.
5. **Come back down** and repeat.

2–3 sets of 10–15 reps, slowly and with control, as tolerated

From Armin's video description

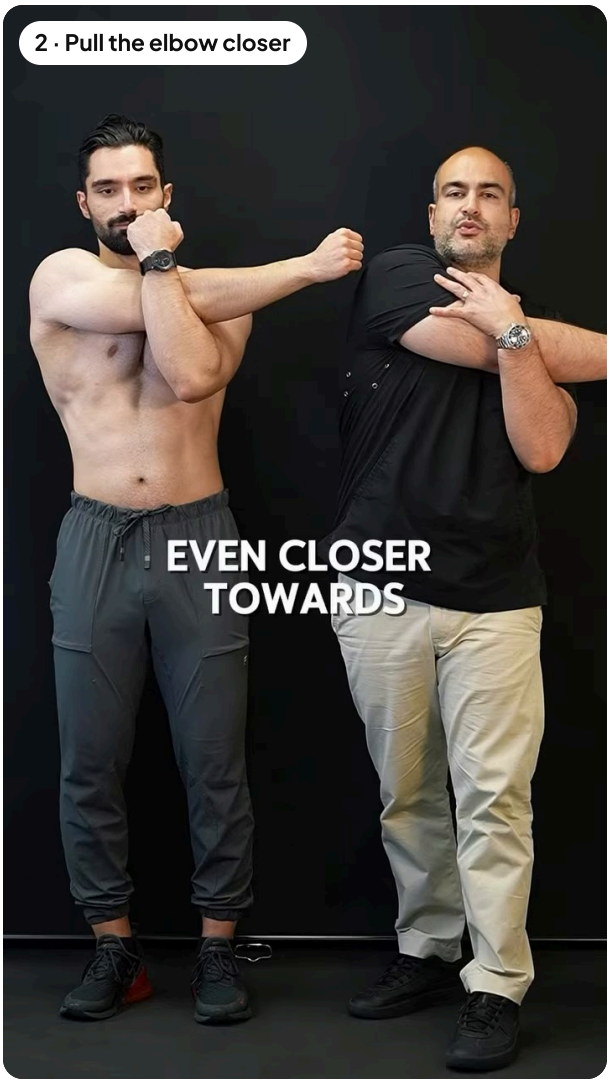
Suggested: move in and out of the position smoothly rather than holding it. A gentle pull is OK; any tingling should fade as soon as you come back down.

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain above about 4/10, or tingling, numbness or burning that builds or doesn't settle quickly.

2 Cross-body shoulder stretch

Stretches the muscles at the back of the shoulder





1. **Bring your arm across your body** with your opposite hand.
2. **Pull that elbow even closer** towards yourself.
3. **Feel the stretch** in the back of the shoulder and in the upper arm.
4. **Hold it for 30 seconds** and repeat.

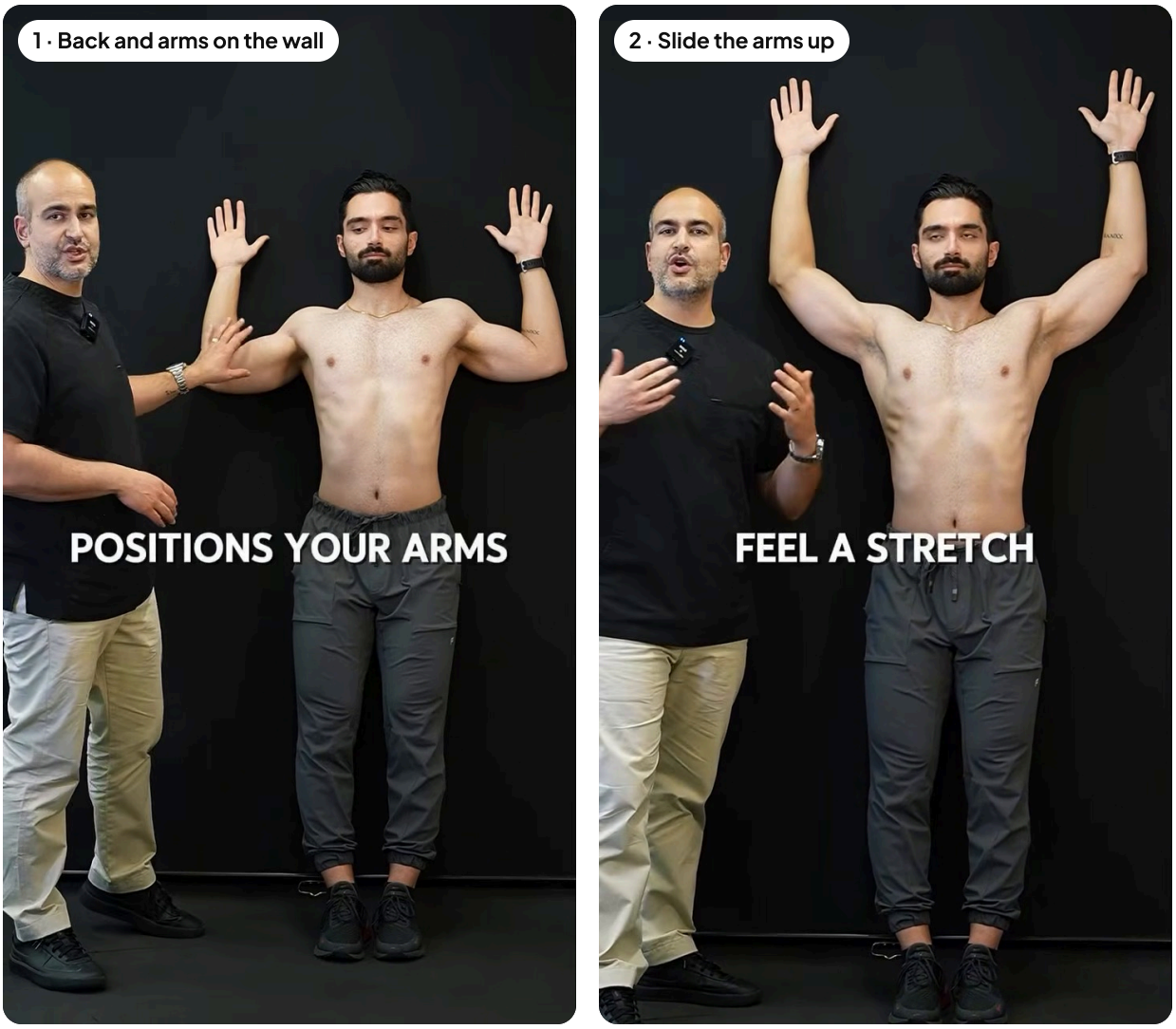
Hold 30 seconds, 2–3 times

Hold from Armin's video; number of repeats suggested

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain above about 4/10, or tingling, numbness or burning that builds or doesn't settle quickly.

3 Wall slide

Improves thoracic (upper back) and shoulder blade mobility



1. **Lean against the wall** like so.
2. **Position your arms this way**, elbows bent with the backs of your arms on the wall.
3. From here, **get those arms up**, making sure you're making contact with the wall.
4. **Go to a point where you feel a stretch.** Hold it gently for about 5 seconds.
5. **Slowly lower back down** and repeat.

2–3 sets of 10–15, with about a 5-second hold at the top

Hold from Armin's video; sets and reps from his video description

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain above about 4/10, or tingling, numbness or burning that builds or doesn't settle quickly.

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Nerve
Radial nerve glide, 2–3 × 10–15

02
Stretch
Cross-body stretch, 30 s × 2–3

03
Mobility
Wall slide, 2–3 × 10–15, 5-s hold

2–3 sets of 10–15, slowly and with control, is from Armin's video description; the 30-second stretch hold and 5-second wall slide hold are from his video. The number of stretch repeats and doing the routine once a day are suggestions. Suggested: mild discomfort up to about **4/10** is OK. Don't push through significant pain.

Stop the exercise if you notice

- Sharp pain at the back of the shoulder or arm
- **Tingling, numbness or burning** that builds or doesn't settle quickly
- Pain above about 4/10, or pain that keeps building as you go
- Symptoms or weakness that are **worse the next day**

If an exercise keeps causing these, stop it and get assessed. Similar symptoms can come from an irritated nerve in the neck, so numbness or weakness that doesn't go away should always be assessed.

SAFETY FIRST

Get checked right away if you have

- Shoulder or arm pain after a **fall or accident**, especially if the shoulder **looks out of place**
- **Chest pain, shortness of breath**, sweating, or pain spreading to your **jaw or arm**
- **Sudden weakness** straightening the wrist or fingers (a **dropped wrist**), or weakness that came on quickly
- **Numbness, tingling or weakness** that is spreading or getting worse
- A shoulder or arm that is **hot, red and swollen**, or pain with a **fever**
- **Constant pain at night** that doesn't ease with rest, or **unexplained weight loss**

Call 911 for chest pain or trouble breathing. For a sudden dropped wrist or quickly worsening weakness, see a doctor right away or go to the nearest emergency department. If your symptoms aren't improving after a few weeks, **book an assessment**.

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NEED MORE HELP?

Book an assessment with Armin

In clinic or virtually. See current options and times at the link.

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Disclaimer: This handout is for education only. It is not a diagnosis or medical advice and does not replace an assessment by a qualified health professional. If you're unsure whether these exercises are right for you, check with your physiotherapist or doctor first.

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