



early Therapy In Perinatal Stroke

# Gentle Stretches

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## Gentle Stretches



Some of the muscles on your baby's **RIGHT** side may tighten up over time.



Carrying out some simple, gentle stretches may help to reduce this tightness and maintain the flexibility and range of movement your baby has at each joint.

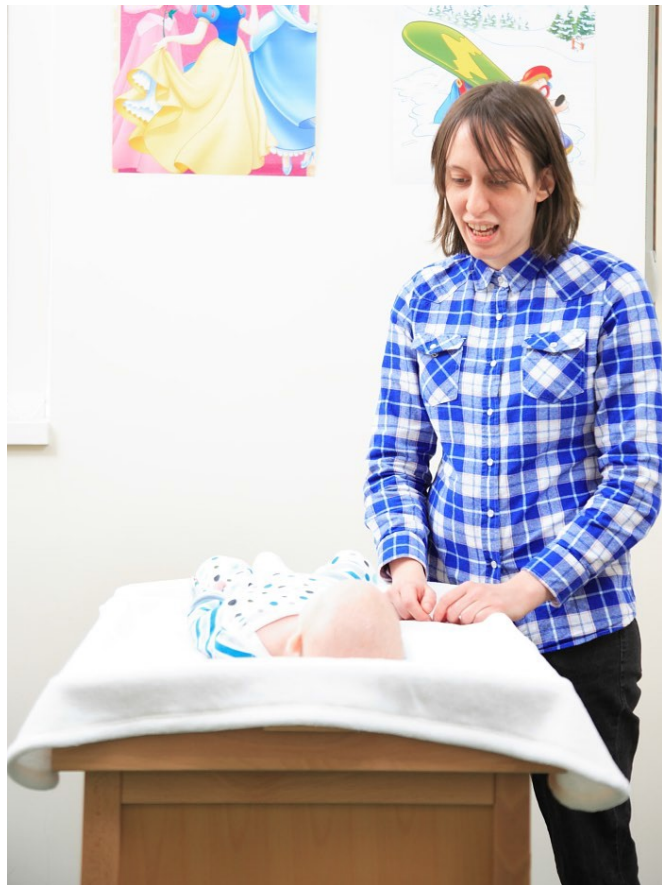
Ask your therapist to demonstrate how to do these stretches the first time.



Try to repeat these stretches two or three times a day at nappy change time.

At nappy change time your baby will be lying on his or her back which is perfect for these stretches. Try to position yourself a little to baby's **RIGHT** if you can.

Stretch baby's joints one at a time, slowly and gently in order to avoid causing damage and only do these stretches while your baby is awake.



Gently stretching joints on both sides of baby's body will let you feel any differences between the two sides.



We suggest gently stretching baby's **left** side first and then the **RIGHT** side so you can compare how the movement feels.

It is likely to be the **RIGHT** side where any stiffness might be felt.

**SAFETY NOTE:** These movements must be gentle. Never force a joint to move. If a particular joint is repeatedly stiff and difficult to move, contact your therapist or other health professional.



Sometimes baby might resist these gentle stretches and this can be mistaken for stiffness so it is important to repeat the stretches at different times of the day. If you find that the same joint on the **RIGHT** side feels stiffer than the **left** one most of the time then you should let your therapist or health professional know.



As you do the stretches talk to your baby about what you are doing e.g. **“Let’s give your left shoulder a big stretch!”**



Place one hand just above and your other hand just below each joint you are moving and then move the joints as described on the following pages.



## Step 1 Shoulders - Hands Up! (*shoulder flexion*)



**LEFT** shoulder first:

a) Rest **your left** hand on **baby's LEFT** shoulder and gently grasp **baby's LEFT** forearm with **your right** hand.



b) Keeping **baby's LEFT** shoulder stable now move **baby's LEFT** arm upwards so that it is pointing up to the ceiling.



c) Continue moving it in an arc until it is straight above baby's head in a 'hands up' position.



d) Now move **baby's LEFT** arm back to his or her side in the same movement.



e) Repeat with **baby's RIGHT** shoulder.

## Step 2 Shoulders - Snow Angels! (shoulder abduction)

**LEFT** shoulder first:

a) Rest **your left** hand on **baby's LEFT** shoulder and gently grasp **baby's LEFT** forearm with **your right** hand.



b) Move **baby's LEFT** arm out to the side keeping it almost touching the mat and move it in an arc until it is straight above baby's head in a 'hands up' position.



c) Move **baby's LEFT** arm back to his or her side with the same movement.



d) Repeat with **baby's RIGHT** shoulder.



### Step 3 Elbows - Bend and Straighten (*flexion and extension*)

**LEFT** elbow first

a) Rest **your LEFT** hand on **baby's LEFT** shoulder and gently grasp **baby's LEFT** forearm with hand. **your RIGHT** hand.



b) Gently bend and straighten **baby's LEFT** elbow.



c) Repeat with **baby's RIGHT** elbow.

### Step 4 Forearm Turns (*forearm rotation*)

**LEFT** forearm first

a) Gently hold **baby's LEFT** upper arm with **your right** hand and gently hold **baby's LEFT** forearm and hand with **your left** hand.



b) Gently turn **baby's LEFT** hand and forearm so baby's palm faces up.



c) Repeat with **baby's RIGHT** arm.



## Step 5 Wrists - Up and Down (*wrist flexion and extension*)

### **LEFT** wrist first

a) Gently grasp baby's **LEFT** forearm with one hand and hold baby's **LEFT** hand with your other hand.



b) Gently bend baby's **LEFT** wrist up.



c) Gently bend baby's **LEFT** wrist down.



d) Repeat with baby's **RIGHT** wrist.

## Step 6 Fingers—Straighten (*finger extension*)

### **LEFT** fingers first

a) Hold **baby's LEFT** hand and gently straighten the fingers.



b) Repeat with **baby's RIGHT** hand.

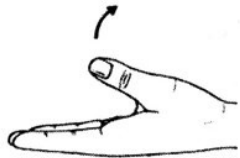
## Step 7 Thumbs Up and Out! - (thumb abduction and extension)

### LEFT thumb first

- a) Gently grasp baby's **LEFT** forearm with one hand and hold baby's **LEFT** hand with your other hand.



- b) Gently straighten baby's **LEFT** thumb upwards, away from the palm.



This is called *thumb abduction*.

- c) Now gently stretch the thumb out to the side of the hand which is the movement of the thumb you would use to make a hand span.



This is called *thumb extension*.

- d) Repeat the above with baby's **RIGHT** thumb.

## Step 8 Knees - Cycling

**Both legs move together**

- a) Gently grasp both of baby's ankles and bend the knees.
- b) Move baby's legs so they are moving in an alternating pattern just like slow cycling, so that one leg is down while the other is up. Move baby's legs smoothly and slowly as you do this.

