Neurological Physiotherapy

Skill Number: U 8

Impairment: Loss of dexterity

Aim: To train shoulder abduction without excessive shoulder elevation in preparation for reaching

Rationale:
Excessive shoulder elevation is a common adaptive strategy patients use when reaching. Task-related training is set up so the patient can practice with support from a plinth and/or manual guidance from the therapist (if necessary) without using this adaptive strategy.

Equipment:
- Adjustable height plinth
- Chair

Key Points:
- Patient is positioned in sitting, arm supported on plinth, arm positioned in 90° shoulder abduction and 90° elbow flexion
- Patient depresses the shoulder
- To progress this training, patient lifts elbow and/or hand off the plinth while maintaining shoulder depression
- Therapist is positioned to the side or behind the patient and provides manual guidance at the arm if necessary

Common Errors:
- Patient flexes trunk laterally

Progression and Variety:
- Decrease/remove manual guidance or support of plinth
- Increase amplitude of movement
- Increase speed of movement
- Sustain muscle contraction