

CHAPTER 4

EXERCISES

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PRECAUTIONS

The purposes of the exercises are to abolish pain and, where appropriate, to restore normal function — that is, to regain full mobility in the neck or as much movement as possible under the given circumstances. When you are exercising for pain relief, you should move to the edge of the pain or just into the pain, then release the pressure and return to the starting position. But when you are exercising for stiffness, the exercises can be made more effective by using your hands and gently but firmly applying overpressure in order to obtain the maximum amount of movement. Postural correction and maintenance of the correct posture should always follow the exercises. Once you no longer have neck pain, good postural habits are essential to prevent the recurrence of neck problems.

In order to determine whether the exercise programme is good for you it is very important that you observe closely any changes in the location of the pain. You may notice that pain, originally felt to one side of the spine, across the shoulders or down the arm, moves towards the centre of your neck as a result of the exercises. In other words your pain localises or centralises. *Centralisation of pain (Fig. 4:1) that takes place as you exercise is a good sign.* If your pain moves from areas further away from the neck, where it is usually felt, towards the midline of the spine, you are exercising correctly and this exercise programme is the right one for you.

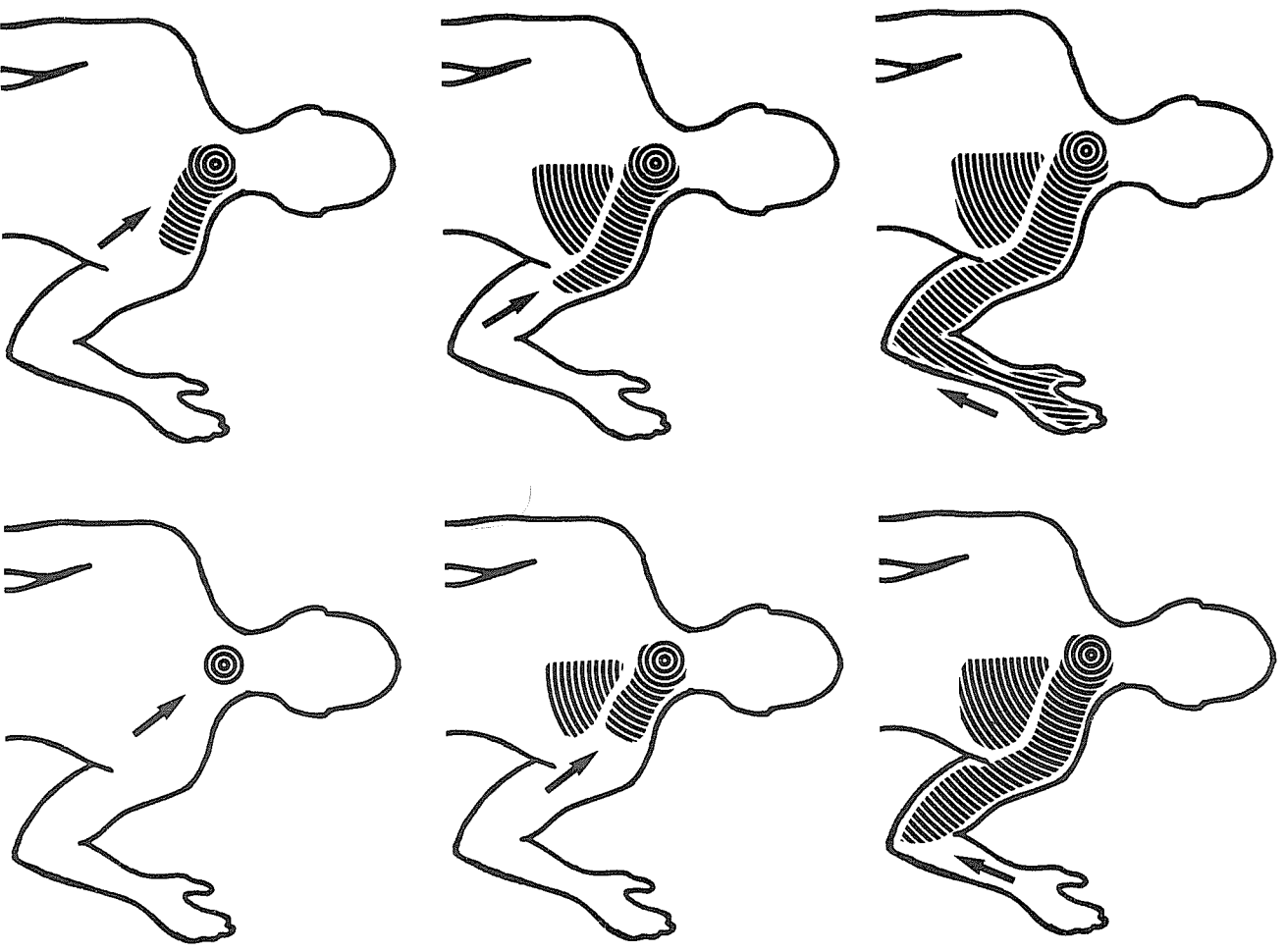


Fig. 4:1
Progression of centralisation of pain indicates suitability of exercise programme.