

Exercises for Shoulder Pain

For you to do at home

Do these exercises to help reduce pain and strain in your shoulder. These exercises also retrain your muscles to move the shoulder correctly.

Your Home Exercise Program

While doing your home exercise program, please know that:

- None of these exercises should cause sharp pain. If you have sharp pain, avoid that exercise for the day.
- If you have more soreness a few hours after your exercises or the next morning, it may mean that you overdid it. If this happens, you can:
 - Do that exercise fewer times a day.
 - Do fewer repetitions (reps) of that exercise. For instance, if it says to do the exercise 20 times, do 10 reps instead and see how you feel.
- If your shoulder is sore, apply ice for 10 minutes 2 times a day. Do not put the ice right on your skin. Use a clean towel between the ice pack and your skin.

Every shoulder exercise begins with moving the shoulder blades. To do this, pull your shoulders down and back. Do **not** move them up and forward as shown in the top photo at right.



Poor posture

Posture

A lot of neck and shoulder tension can be reduced just by watching the way you hold yourself during the day. For best posture:

- Keep your lower back in a neutral position. To do this, hold your belly button in and sit up straight.
- Keep your shoulder blades **gently** drawn down and back, as if you were trying to reach your buttocks on the opposite side.
- Hold your head up straight, in line with your shoulders. See bottom photo at right.



Good posture

Your goal is to be in this position throughout the day, as your muscle strength improves.

If you cannot sit with good posture and do your work at your desk, move your computer screen, keypad, or other devices to match your position. Do **not** change your good posture to do your work.



Scapular (Shoulder Blade) Squeeze

- Sit on a firm surface, such as a hard chair.
- Gently squeeze your shoulder blades down and back. This is the same motion you use for good posture, but squeezing and holding for a couple of seconds helps your muscles get stronger.
- While doing this, try to keep your head in the same position over your shoulders. Keep your low back from arching
- Hold the squeeze for 2 seconds, then release. Do this 15 times.
- Do 2 sets of 15 reps.

Neck Stretch

- Sit on a hard chair. Use the good posture that you learned in the exercise on page 1.
- Hang one arm down. With that hand, hold onto the chair seat.
- Place your other hand on the top of your head. Apply gentle pressure while you turn your head, pointing your nose down into the armpit of your raised arm. Do this until you feel a pull along the back of your neck. Stop if you start to feel pain.
- Hold for 20 seconds, then release. Repeat 4 times.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Do this exercise up to 4 times a day.





Chest Stretch

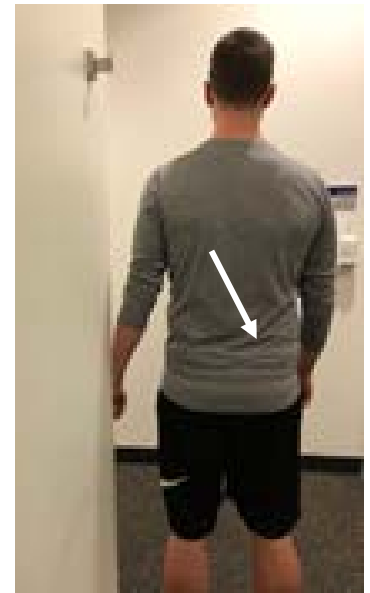
- Stand in a doorway with your forearms on either side of the frame as shown. If you do not have a doorway, or it is too wide, use a wall to do this stretch one arm at a time.
- Gently step forward into the doorway until you feel a pull across the front of your shoulder and chest.
- Do not stick your neck out or arch your lower back.
- Hold this stretch for 20 seconds, then release. Repeat 4 times.
- Do this stretch up to 4 times a day.



Lower Trapezius Training

The *lower trapezius* muscles help hold your shoulder blades in the right position when you are using your arms. This exercise helps strengthen and train those muscles.

- Stand by the corner of a wall or in a doorway, as shown. Place the palm of your hand against the wall or doorway.
- While you draw the shoulder blade on that side of your body down and back, gently press your palm into the wall. This should feel like the motion you did for the scapular squeeze.
- Hold 3 seconds and release. Repeat this squeeze 15 times, then relax. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.
- Repeat using the other arm and hand.



If your muscles get tired and you have a hard time doing this exercise properly, do fewer reps.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UW Medicine Sports Medicine Clinic: Call 206.598.DAWG (3294) and press 2 during clinic hours:

Monday-Thursday: 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Friday: 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday: 8 a.m. to 12 noon

Sunday: Closed