

Patient Information

Physiotherapy

Shoulder Class – Week 3

Improving scapular position, movement patterns and cuff control

The position and movement of your scapular (shoulder blade) is important as it prevents irritation of the rotator cuff tendons and soft tissue. Many shoulder problems are due to “impingement” of the rotator cuff tendons, so learning the skills to address this is valuable, but it can be tricky, and takes time to master.

Rules of thumb

Try not to be too tense when doing movement exercises, try and make them look and feel natural. It may be helpful to watch someone else move their shoulder and then copy them whilst looking in a mirror.

Rotator cuff strengthening exercises should not be painful, so don't push through the pain. If the “range of movement” is painful or the “weight” that you are using is too heavy and causes you pain, then restrict yourself to a comfortable intensity.

Scapular setting

Whilst sitting or standing upright (remember your posture correction exercises from week 2)

- Lift your shoulder upwards 1cm
- Retract your shoulder 1 cm
- **Hold for 10 seconds**
- **Relax then repeat 10 times**



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- Lying on your back
- Elbow away from your body
- Elbow resting on a rolled towel or small pillow
- Elbow flexed with your hand pointed to the ceiling
- Rotate your forearm down and up
- Maintain your upper arm away from your body and the 90 degree bend at your elbow
- **Repeat 10 to 15 times**

Don't let your shoulder "pop" forward and don't push through the pain

The rotator cuff exercises can be progressed by doing them with a weight in your hand, try starting with 500 grams and increase gradually in 500 gram increments.

The exercises can be progressed further and in a more functional manner by standing up. Initially do these exercises with your elbow resting on the wall to give you valuable feedback. Again, increase the weight in your hand in 500 gram increments.

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Serratus anterior

The serratus anterior is a useful muscle that helps the rotation of your shoulder blade



- Start in 4 point kneeling position or standing and leaning against a wall
- Your shoulders should be level
- Push through your arms so that your back arches
- Relax so that your chest drops towards the floor or the wall
- **Repeat 10 to 15 times**

This can be advanced by doing half press-ups or going into a plank position.

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Superman

The superman exercise challenges your “core” and provides feedback that works your deltoid and rotator cuff muscles, and serratus anterior.



- Start in 4 point kneeling position
- Engage your core
- Float your uninjured arm off the floor
- Repeat on the other side with your injured arm
- Change the challenge yourself by moving your legs instead
- Progress further by simultaneously lifting opposite arm and leg
- Try and breathe out as you lift your limbs and breathe in as you lower them



Active movement

Having spent some time “waking up” your rotator-cuff, serratus anterior and postural muscles, try and translate them into a dynamic movement.

- Remember your good posture position from last week
- Set your shoulder blade
- Gently engage your core

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- Maintain your core
- Step forward with one leg
- Lift the arm on the same side



- Return to the starting point
- And check that your scapular is set correctly
- Lean through your leg
- Reach up high to the ceiling

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