

## **ROTATOR CUFF HOME PROGRAM**

### **PHASE I**

Unconditioned, imbalanced muscles of the shoulder area can cause rotator cuff injuries. As the rotator cuff fatigues from excessive use, weakness, or lack of endurance, the ball of the shoulder joint becomes more mobile and moves upward. This causes the rotator cuff tendons to come in contact with bone, which can lead to irritation of the tendon, then inflammation and pain, then ultimately an injury (shoulder tendonitis, bursitis, impingement, etc.). Along with keeping the ball firmly in its socket, the rotator cuff has functions related to performance in sports. The rotator cuff provides power and control for the golf swing, tennis stroke, baseball/softball throw and pitch, volleyball serve and spike, and swimming. The exercises described below are to help you strengthen the muscles in your shoulder (especially the muscles of the rotator cuff--the part that helps circular motion). These exercises should not cause pain. If the exercise hurts, stop exercising. Start again with a lighter resistance.

### **RESISTANCE**

The exercises described below are designed to improve endurance of the shoulder musculature, with strength gains being secondary. Therefore the emphasis is on controlled movement with low resistance and high repetitions. The use tubing is required for several of the exercises below with the others utilizing body weight or small dumbbells. . You should strive for perfect execution throughout your routine to help restore the proper movement patterns and reduce the symptoms in your shoulder.

### **FREQUENCY**

Perform all the exercises 5 days per week, 1-2 times per day. Begin by performing 15 repetitions of each exercise for the first 3 days and then progressing to 2 sets of 15 repetitions. After 10 days progress yourself to performing 3 sets of 15 to 20 repetitions.

### **POSTURE**

Perfect posture is one of the key elements in maintaining a healthy shoulder. Think of a skeleton hanging in a classroom. Its shoulders are naturally hanging back and down, giving it perfect posture and alignment. Unfortunately, most people have a tendency to slump forward, with their shoulder blades sliding forward and up. If you spend much of your day in front of a computer, as many Americans do, you're probably slumping over, even if you're not conscious of it.

Keep your Shoulder blades pulled back and down (SBD) towards your waist, as if you're thrusting your chest up. It is important to keep your shoulders in this position throughout the exercises and in life.

## Strengthening

### 1. Standing Row

#### Repetitions

3 sets of 8

**Main muscles worked:** Middle and lower trapezius

You should feel this exercise at the back of your shoulder and into your upper back

#### Days per week

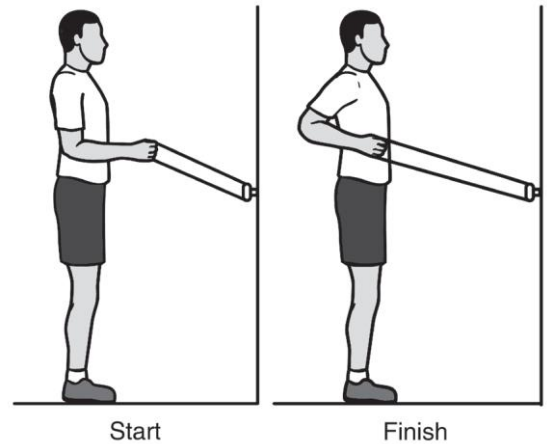
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**Equipment needed:** Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance. As the exercise becomes easier to perform, progress to 3 sets of 12 repetitions. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can also be performed on a weight machine. A fitness assistant at your gym can instruct you on how to use the machines safely.

#### Step-by-step directions

- Make a 3-foot-long loop with the elastic band and tie the ends together. Attach the loop to a doorknob or other stable object.
- Stand holding the band with your elbow bent and at your side, as shown in the start position.
- Keep your arm close to your side and slowly pull your elbow straight back.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

**Tip** Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you pull.



### 2. External Rotation

#### Repetitions

2 sets of 10

**Main muscles worked:** Infraspinatus, teres minor, posterior deltoid

You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder and upper back

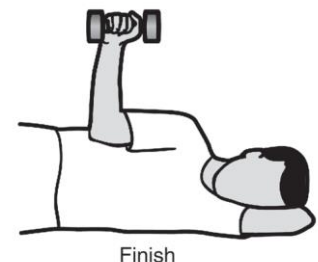
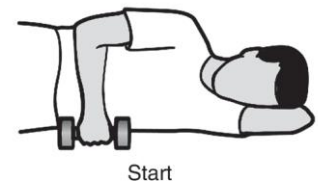
#### Days per week

3

**Equipment needed:** Begin with weights that allow 2 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions (approximately 1 to 2 pounds), and progress to 3 sets of 5 repetitions. As the exercise becomes easier, add weight in 1-pound increments to a maximum of 5 pounds. Each time you increase the weight, start again at 2 sets of 8 to 10 repetitions.

#### Step-by-step directions

- Lie on your side on a firm, flat surface with your unaffected arm under you, cradling your head.
- Hold your injured arm against your side as shown, with your elbow bent at a 90° angle.
- Keep your elbow against your side and slowly rotate your arm at the shoulder, raising the weight to a vertical position.
- Slowly lower the weight to the starting position to a count of 5.





### 3. Internal Rotation

#### Repetitions

3 sets of 8

**Main muscles worked:** Pectoralis, subscapularis

You should feel this exercise at your chest and shoulder

#### Days per week

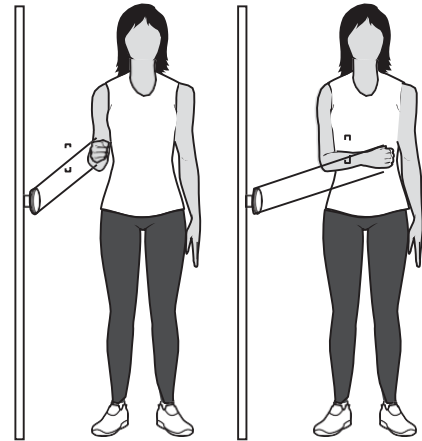
3

**Equipment needed:** Use an elastic stretch band of comfortable resistance. As the exercise becomes easier to perform, progress to 3 sets of 12 repetitions. If you have access to a fitness center, this exercise can also be performed on a weight machine. A fitness assistant at your gym can instruct you on how to use the machines safely.

#### Step-by-step directions

- Make a 3-foot-long loop with the elastic band and tie the ends together. Attach the loop to a doorknob or other stable object.
- Stand holding the band with your elbow bent and at your side, as shown in the start position.
- Keep your elbow close to your side and bring your arm across your body.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

**Tip** Keep your elbow pressed into your side.



### 4. Trapezius Strengthening

#### Repetitions

3 sets of 20

**Main muscles worked:** Middle and posterior deltoid, supraspinatus, middle trapezius You should feel this exercise at the back of your shoulder and into your upper back

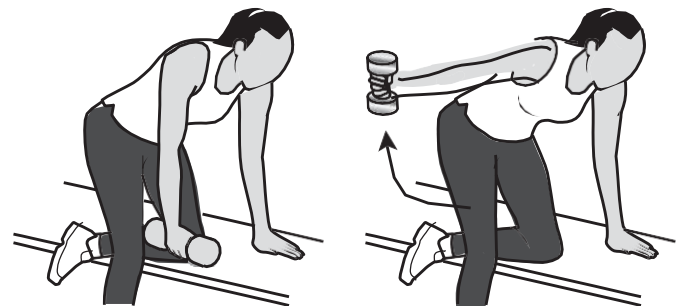
#### Days per week

3 to 5

**Equipment needed:** Begin with a light enough weight to allow 3 to 4 sets of 20 repetitions without pain. As the exercise becomes easier to perform, add 2 to 3 pounds of weight, but do fewer repetitions. Progress to 3 sets of 15 repetitions at each weight increment, with the maximum weight approximately 5 to 7 pounds.

#### Step-by-step directions

- Place your knee on a bench or chair and lean forward so that your hand reaches the bench and helps support your weight. Your other hand is at your side, palm facing your body.
- Slowly raise your arm, rotating your hand to the thumbs-up position and stopping when your hand is shoulder height, with your arm parallel to the floor.
- Slowly lower your arm to the original position to a count of 5.



**Tip** Use a weight that makes the last few repetitions difficult, but pain-free.

## Stretches

### 1. *Pendulum*

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**Repetitions**

2 sets of 10

**Main muscles worked:** Deltoids, supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis

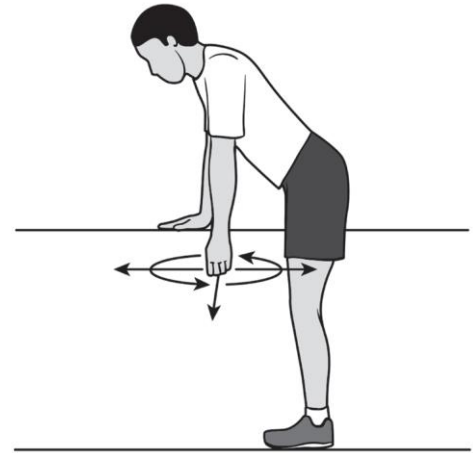
**Equipment needed:** None

**Days per week**

5 to 6

**Step-by-step directions**

- Lean forward and place one hand on a counter or table for support. Let your other arm hang freely at your side.
- Gently swing your arm forward and back. Repeat the exercise moving your arm side-to-side, and repeat again in a circular motion.
- Repeat the entire sequence with the other arm.



**Tip** Do not round your back or lock your knees.

### 2. *Crossover Arm Stretch*

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**Repetitions**

4 each side

**Main muscles worked:** Posterior deltoid

You should feel this stretch at the back of your shoulder

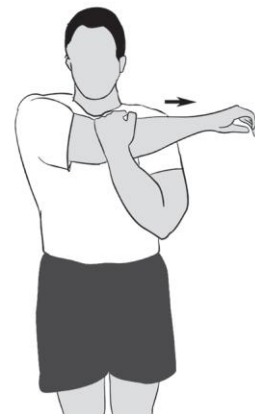
**Equipment needed:** None

**Days per week**

5 to 6

**Step-by-step directions**

- Relax your shoulders and gently pull one arm across your chest as far as possible, holding at your upper arm.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat with the other arm.



**Tip** Do not pull or put pressure on your elbow.

### 3. *Passive Internal Rotation*

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**Repetitions**

4 each side

**Main muscles worked:** Subscapularis

You should feel this stretch at the front of your shoulder

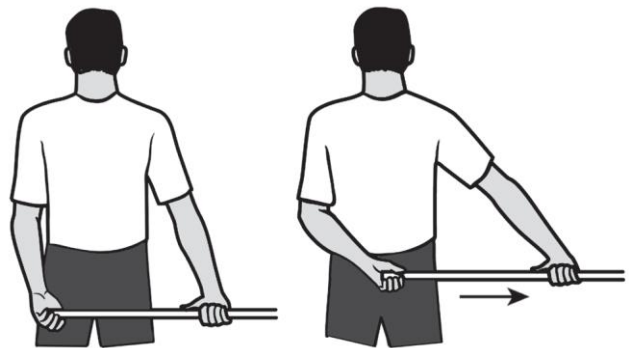
**Days per week**

5 to 6

**Equipment needed:** Light stick, such as a yardstick

**Step-by-step directions**

- Hold a stick behind your back with one hand, and lightly grasp the other end of the stick with your other hand.
- Pull the stick horizontally as shown so that your shoulder is passively stretched to the point of feeling a pull without pain.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.



Start

Finish

**Tip** Do not lean over or twist to side while pulling the stick.

### 4. *Passive External Rotation*

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**Repetitions**

4 each side

**Main muscles worked:** Infraspinatus, teres minor

You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder

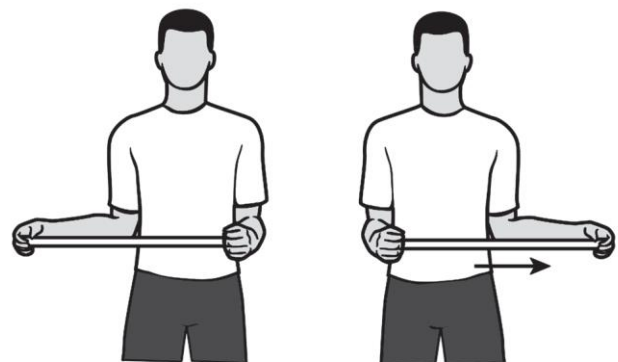
**Equipment needed:** Light stick, such as a yardstick

**Days per week**

5 to 6

**Step-by-step directions**

- Grasp the stick with one hand and cup the other end of the stick with the other hand.
- Keep the elbow of the shoulder you are stretching against the side of your body and push the stick horizontally as shown to the point of feeling a pull without pain.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.



Start

Finish

**Tip** Keep your hips facing forward and do not twist.

- Repeat on the other side

