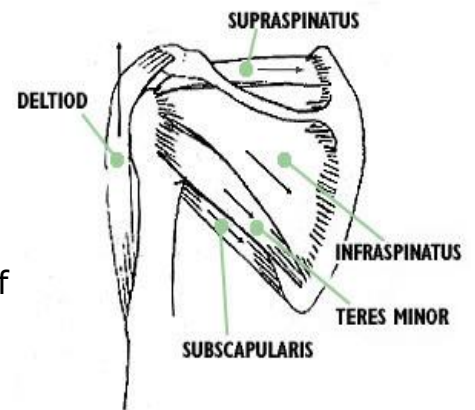


Rotator Cuff Exercises

The arm bone (humerus) and the shoulder blade (scapula) form the main joint in the shoulder. The joint socket is shallow, allowing a wide range of motion in the arm but unfortunately low amount of stability. When the elbow is above shoulder height, the shoulder is least stable. The rotator cuff is made up of 4 muscles that surround the shoulder. These muscles are named; supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis, and teres minor. The rotator cuff keeps the shoulder steady as the arm moves stabilizing the shoulder in the joint socket.



Before you start

The exercises described below are to help you strengthen the muscles in your shoulder (especially the muscles of the rotator cuff. **These exercises should not cause you pain. If the exercise hurts, stop exercising.** Start again with a lighter weight. Look at the pictures with each exercise so you can use the correct position. **The first time doing these exercises, perform them without any weight, this allows activation of the involved muscles. Warm up before adding weights.** Stretch your arms and shoulders, and do the following pendulum exercises:

Bend from the waist, letting your arms hang down. Keep your arm and shoulder muscles relaxed, and move your arms slowly back and forth in a circular motion. Perform this exercise slowly while breathing:



Exercise 1 - Pendulum

Do the following exercises with **low resistance tubing or light weights.** Keep repeating each exercise until your arm is tired. **Use a light enough tension tubing or weight that your muscles don't get fatigued until you've done the exercise about 20 to 30 repetitions.** Increase the weight a little each week (but never so much that the weight causes pain). Start with about 2 ounces the first week. Move up to 4 ounces the second week, 8 ounces the next week and so on up to a maximum of about 1-2 pounds.

Each time you finish doing all the exercises, put an ice pack on your shoulder for 20 minutes. It's best to use a plastic bag with ice cubes in it or gel packs. If you do all the exercises 4 to 5 times a week & **avoid overhead activities**, your rotator cuff muscles will become stronger to better stabilize your shoulder joint.

Exercise 2 (Infraspinatus/Teres Minor)

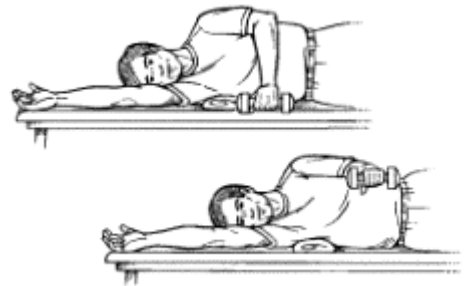
Tubing exercise for external rotation: Stand resting the hand of your injured side against your stomach. The tubing should be very low resistance to begin and gradually increase tension over the weeks. With that hand grasp the tubing that is connected to a doorknob or other object at waist level. **Hold a small towel with your elbow between your body in order to keep your elbow in at your side.** Rotate your arm outward and away from your waist. **Make sure you keep your elbow bent 90 degrees and your forearm parallel to the floor.** Repeat until shoulder fatigue. **Discontinue if any pain.**



Tubing exercise for external rotation

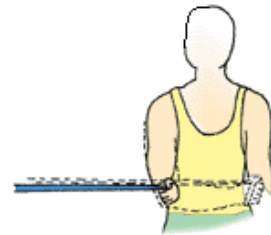
Alternative – Side lying with low weight

Lie on your uninjured side with your injured arm at your side and your elbow bent to 90°. Keep your elbow against your side, raise your forearm and hold for 2 seconds. Slowly lower your arm. You can start doing this exercise holding a soup can or light weight and gradually increase the weight as long as there is no pain.



Exercise 3 (Subscapularis)

Tubing exercise for internal rotation: Using tubing connected to a door knob or other object at waist level, rotate your injured arm inward across your body. **Hold a small towel with your elbow between your body in order to keep your elbow in at your side.** Make sure you keep your forearm parallel to the floor. Repeat until shoulder fatigue. **Discontinue if any pain.**



Tubing exercise for internal rotation

Exercise 4 (Supraspinatus)

In a standing position, start with your arms straight down, thumbs towards body. Raise your injured arm away from your body **only about 6 inches, don't lift beyond this point or else you will be contracting the deltoids which will cause more shoulder dysfunction.** Slowly lower your arm. Repeat the exercise until your arm is tired. Then do the exercise with your uninjured arm.



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