

Shoulder Strengthening Exercises

Common Questions



**More information can be found on
Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com**

Are there certain strengthening exercises I should do to build up the muscles of my shoulder?

Once you have regained the majority of the range of motion of your shoulder, you should start doing strengthening exercises to rebuild the muscles of the shoulder joint and the muscles that surround it.

Do I have to use weights to rebuild the muscles of the shoulder joint?

To start the process of rebuilding the muscles of the shoulder, weights are not necessary. The first step is to do exercises called isometric muscle strengthening. These exercises help restore tone to the muscles without the shoulder moving.

What if I am recovery from an injury or from surgery, are there any exercises that I can do to help keep the muscles strong or to keep muscle tone?

Isometric shoulder exercises are the first exercises to do to start rebuilding the muscles of the shoulder following an injury or from surgery.

What are isometric shoulder exercises?

Isometric exercises are done where motion is resisted either by the good arm or by some immovable object such as a door jamb or wall. In each exercise, no motion is allowed but rather the resistance against the movement of the muscle helps restore the muscle tone. These exercises

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are often done when the range of motion of the shoulder is limited secondary to an injury or following surgery.

The next six exercises are designed to maintain muscle tone. It is important to note that in each isometric exercise no motion is allowed. I.e. motion is resisted and prevented by the good arm or an immovable object such as a door jamb or wall.

EXTERNAL ROTATORS

Lying on back—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, grasp wrist of operated arm with good hand, attempt to move operated hand outward, resisting motion with the good hand. Do not allow the operated arm to move.



INTERNAL ROTATORS

Lying on back—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, grasp wrist of operated arm with good hand, attempt to move operated hand inward, resisting any motion with the good hand.



EXTERNAL ROTATORS

Standing—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, attempt to push hand outward against door jamb.



INTERNAL ROTATORS

Standing—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, attempt to push hand inward against the door jamb.



EXTENSORS

Standing—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, attempt to press elbow backward against a wall.



MIDDLE DELTOID

Standing—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close to body, attempt to move elbow out to side against a wall.



ANTERIOR DELTOID

Standing—Elbow flexed to 90° and held close against the body, push fist forward against a wall.



How often can I do these isometric shoulder exercises?

Shoulder isometric exercises can be done up to three to four times per day depending on how much time you have and how painful your shoulder is.

Are shoulder isometric exercises painful?

Shoulder isometric exercises can cause some mild pain which is not unusual. If the exercises are too painful, you should stop and consult with your physical therapist or surgeon as you may be doing them too vigorously or improperly.

What are some examples of shoulder isometric exercises?

One of the first isometric shoulder strengthening exercises is for internal and external rotation strength. Standing up next to a door jamb, the elbow is flexed to ninety degrees and held close to your body, you then push your hand outward toward the door jamb for external rotation strength. For internal rotation, you do the opposite and push the hand inward toward the door jamb.

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Isometric shoulder external rotation



Isometric shoulder internal rotation

Can I use rubber bands to help regain my strength?

Once you have regained the majority of the range of motion of your shoulder, a more aggressive strengthening program is often initiated which includes the use of large rubber bands which can give resistance.



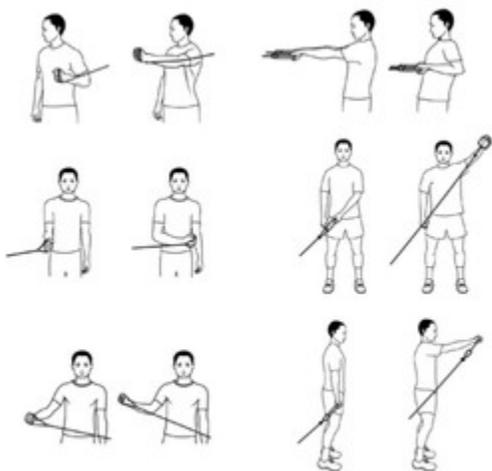
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Are there different types of band exercises for my shoulder?

There are many different types of band exercises that can be done to strengthen your shoulder muscles. These can be done to improve strength in flexion, extension, abduction, internal and external rotation.



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Why are the bands a different color?

The bands used for shoulder strengthening are a different color because they have different resistance. For example, a yellow band may be the easiest with the least resistance. Once you can do the exercises with the yellow band, you may graduate to a band with more resistance which may be red or green.

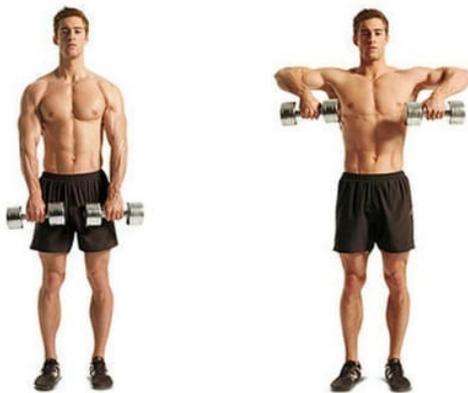
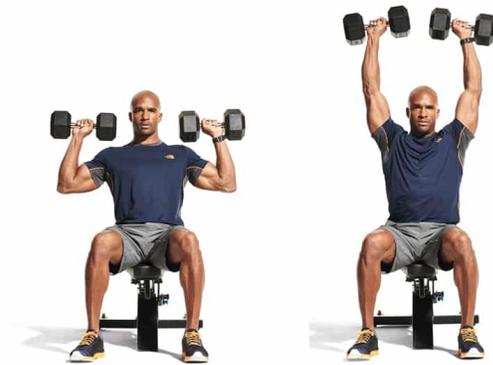
What about using weights for shoulder strengthening?

To further strength your shoulder, a regular weight lifting regimen is the best way to keep your muscles strong and to improve strength. When first starting a shoulder weight lifting program or any weight lifting program for that matter, it is very important to use the proper technique and not to use too heavy of a weight. If you have been under the care of a physical therapist or personal trainer, they can often help you in the beginning to develop a proper program with the right amount of weight.

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How much weight should I use for my shoulder strengthening program?

It is always best to start off with light weights and more repetitions. The shoulder muscles including the rotator cuff muscles are small and so starting with very light weights is very important to develop proper technique. Once you have the proper technique, you can then increase your weight slowly.

Are there specific weight lifting exercises for my rotator cuff?

Similar to using the bands, light weights can be substituted for rotator cuff strengthening exercises.

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Lateral arm raise exercise for the rotator cuff muscles



Forward flexion exercise for the rotator cuff muscles

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Lateral rotation with a light weight for the external rotator muscles of the rotator cuff. This position can be reversed to work the internal rotator muscles of the shoulder.

What if the shoulder weight is too painful?

If any exercise is too painful, you should reduce the weight. In the beginning, you may just be able to lift one or two pounds. As you get stronger, you can add weight and incorporate other strengthening exercises.

Where can I find more information about specific shoulder strengthening exercises?

Dr. Stetson and his staff can provide you with specific shoulder strengthening exercises and an overall fitness manual can be found on Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com/patient education.

There a fitness manual can be found with lots of good overall fitness information.

What if I have any other questions?

If you have any other questions, more information can be found on Dr. Stetson's website at www.sportsmedicinedr.com or just call Dr. Stetson's office, we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

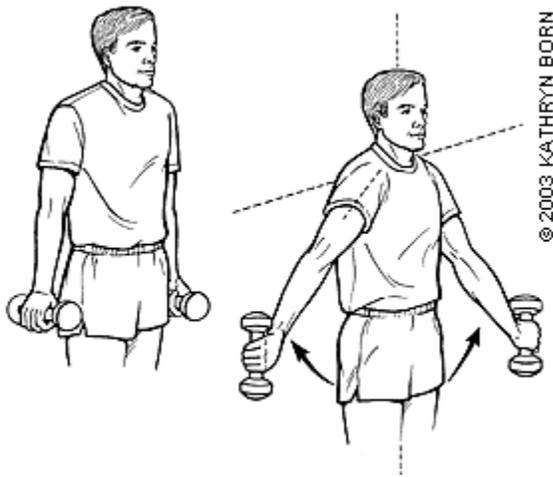
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Shoulder Strengthening Program



For most exercises, we recommend doing 3 sets of 10-15 repetitions. Progress slowly with each exercise. Gradually increasing the number of repetitions, resistance and weight used. Remember, the quality of muscle contraction is more important than number of repetitions or weight!

UPRIGHT SHOULDER ABDUCTION



While standing up, take two light dumbbells in each hand with the arms and elbows resting at your side. Keeping the elbows straight, bring the shoulders away from your body with your thumbs pointed down. Bring them up to almost 90 degrees away from your body. Hold this position for 3-5 seconds and then bring them both down to the starting position. Repeat this again after a few seconds of rest. Do two to three sets of 10-15 repetitions.

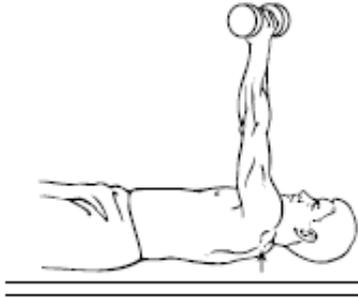
This exercise can be repeated in a similar fashion by bringing the arms and forearms straight in front of you keeping the elbows straight. Again, hold the position for 3-5 seconds and then bring them both down to the starting position. Repeat this again after a few seconds of rest. Do two to three sets of 10-15 repetitions.

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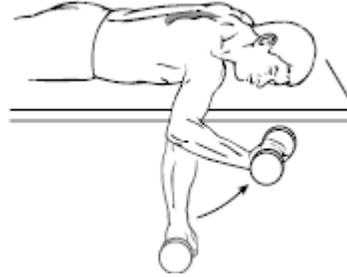
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SCAPULA



Lie on your back holding your arm straight in the air with weight. Tighten arm muscles and lift your shoulder off the floor, keeping the arm straight. Hold for 5-10 seconds, then lower. Relax for 2 seconds, then repeat.



Lie on your stomach with your shoulder on the surface and arm over the edge. Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and pinch your shoulder blades together. Hold for 5-10 seconds, then lower. Relax for 2 seconds, then repeat.

EXTERNAL ROTATION



Lie on your side, with your elbow bent at 90 degrees. Hold weight in hand and tighten arm muscles with arm at your side. Rotate hand and forearm away from body. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then lower. Relax for 2 seconds, then repeat.

SHOULDER DIPS



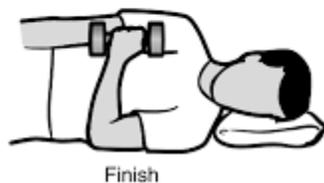
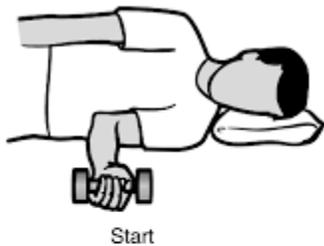
Support yourself on a chair keeping your elbows straight and feet flat on floor. Push down on arm rests keeping back and elbows straight. Hold for 20 seconds. Rest and repeat.

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INTERNAL ROTATION



For internal rotation strength, the exercise is similar for external rotation but the involved shoulder is on the downward side. Lie on your side, with your elbow bent at 90 degrees. Hold weight in hand and tighten arm muscles with arm at your side and bring the hand close to your stomach. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then lower. Relax for 2 seconds, then repeat.

SHOULDER PRESSES



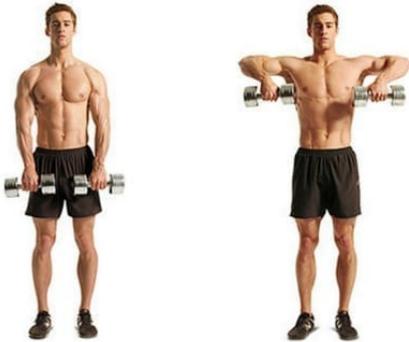
While sitting down, take two light dumbbells in each hand. Bring them up to chest level with the elbows flexed to 90 degrees. Then raise both weights above your head and straighten your elbows. Hold this position for 3-5 seconds and then bring them both down to the starting position. Repeat this again after a few seconds of rest. Do two to three sets of 10-15 repetitions.

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UPRIGHT ROWS



While standing up, take two light dumbbells in each hand with the arms and elbows resting in front of you. Bring the shoulder up to 90 degrees as the elbows are also brought up to 90 degrees. Hold this position for 3-5 seconds and then bring them both down to the starting position. Repeat this again after a few seconds of rest. Do two to three sets of 10-15 repetitions.

TRICEPS AND SCAPULA MUSCLES



Laying on your stomach on an incline bench set to about 45 degrees, two light dumbbells are in either hand near the floor with your elbows straight. Tightening your back muscles, bend your elbows to 90 degrees along with your shoulders. Hold this position for 3-5 seconds and then bring them both down to the starting position. Repeat this again after a few seconds of rest. Do two to three sets of 10-15 repetitions.