



## General Shoulder Care:

### Tips to keep your shoulder in the best condition and out of the Surgeons office!

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle by keeping a healthy weight, performing regular exercise, and avoiding an excess of unhealthy foods. Good & proper posture, especially of your head/neck and scapula helps to keep your shoulder healthy & pain free. Obesity can be related to arthritis of the shoulder and makes it more difficult to manage. Diabetes, which is related to obesity, can contribute to rotator cuff tears and a joint stiffness called frozen shoulder. High cholesterol, which is also related to obesity, can contribute to rotator cuff tears.
- In the COVID-19 era and with more of us working from home or driving long commutes, our postural mechanics suffer. We tend as both athletes and working adults to develop a progressive imbalance with greater strength in our pectoral muscles (the front) than the shoulder blade stabilizers (the back). When you add hours of work, Zoom calls, computer meetings, and daily life this puts our shoulders in a difficult position for optimal function. By balancing our upper body strength and focusing on our shoulder blade stabilizer muscles (rhomboids, trapezius and serratus), we can minimize shoulder pain, enhance rotator cuff and shoulder function, and reduce neck strain and fatigue. A good general rule is stretch the anterior shoulder muscles (pectoralis major & minor) and strengthen the posterior shoulder muscles.
- Be careful when lifting heavy objects or walking on uneven terrain. Many shoulder and elbow injuries are related to falls or to a sudden and uncontrolled shift in weight for a heavy object. These same traumas are some of the main causes of failure after shoulder surgery as well. Make sure you have help lifting heavy or uneven objects and that you are steady on your feet. Always lift with your legs from a stable base. Examine your home for trip hazards such as cords and loose rugs. If you live in a location with snow and ice, work to make sure your walkways are cleared, salted, and that you are using shoes with adequate tread.
- Be sure to perform warm up exercises before starting any moderate or high intensity exercise at home or in the gym. Try to warm up your legs, back, and arms with body weight movements such as squats and arm circles. A proper warm up will help your muscles improve their ability to tolerate more intense exercise.
- When weight-lifting at the gym consider a lower-weight and higher-repetition exercise regimen. Generally, exercises that involve lifting overhead, i.e. Olympic style-lifts, such as squat press, overhead press, and jerk-type exercises, are harder on your shoulders than below-shoulder lifts. Over time, the overhead lifts strain your shoulder cartilage and tendons without giving you substantial improvements in strength and function to make the additional shoulder stress worth the load. Make sure you have strengthened the small stabilizing muscles, such as the rotator cuff muscles and scapular stabilizers,



before strengthening the larger muscles such as the deltoid, trapezius, and pectoralis.

**Home Exercise Program: To keep your shoulder healthy and allowing you to stay active:**

Below is a list of the best exercises, that can be done 1-2 times per week, as an addition to any exercise routine, to keep you shoulder strong and pain-free. Each exercise should be done 10-15 times and 1 -2 sets should be completed. Stop any exercise that causes pain and focus only on those that do not cause pain during or afterwards. Some light muscle soreness lasting no more than 1 day is acceptable. These exercises generally require you to obtain a set of TheraBand's (resistance bands), which are large rubber bands of varying resistances, or a set of light weights. If you do not have weights, soup cans or water bottles can work just as well.

- External rotation – With your elbow bent and your arm at your side, rolled up towel under your arm & side of your body, rotate your arm outward against the resistance of a TheraBand. Slowly return to the start position and repeat. Keep your elbow at your side and your shoulders square. “Squeeze” your shoulder blades together while you rotate out. If you do not have a band, you can also perform this exercise by laying on your side as shown and rotating your arm up so the



**OR**

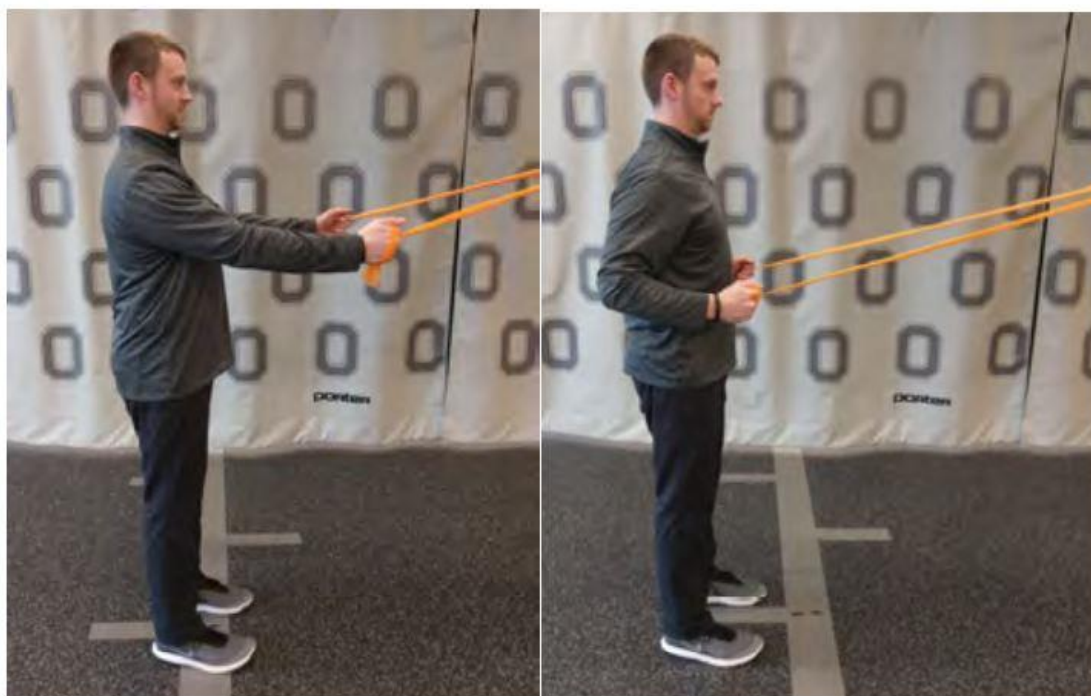




- Internal rotation – With your elbow bent and your arm at your side, with a towel roll between your arm and your side, rotate your arm across your body against the resistance of a TheraBand. Slowly return to the start position and repeat. Keep your elbow at your side.



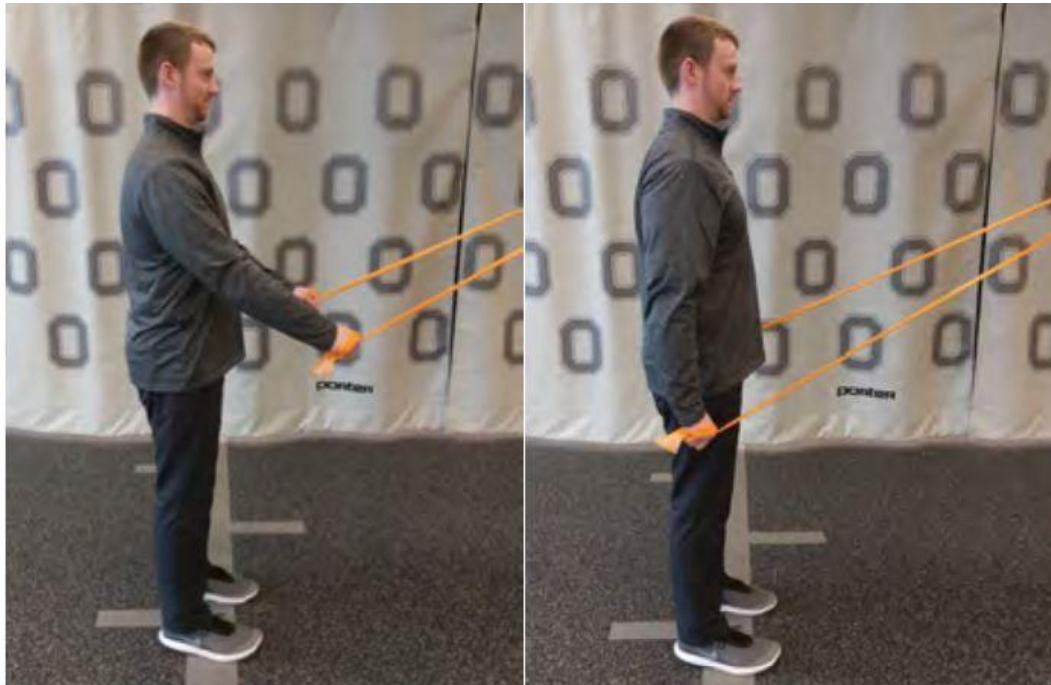
- Shoulder Blade Rows- Stand facing a door with the TheraBand attached to the doorknob. Start with your elbows bent and your upper arms at your side. Keep your upper arm close to your side and pull back until your hand is level with your body. Then slowly return to the start position. “Squeeze” your shoulder blades together when your arms are extended back and as you pull.



- Shoulder Extensions – Tie a knot in the end of your TheraBand then put it over the top of a door and close it. While keeping your elbows straight, pull



the bands from chest height to the side seams of your pants. Slowly return to start position.



- **Shoulder Blade Retraction** – During these exercises, focus upon pulling the shoulder blades together. Start by squeezing the shoulder blades together to get used to the muscles that contract to bring your shoulder into this position. Recreate this sensation during the exercise. Lie on your stomach with your arm hanging towards the floor. Raise your arm to your side until it is parallel to the floor. You can also perform this exercise on an exercise ball to work your core. Repeat with the arms in a “W” position, and in a “T” position.

- **Retraction with Row**



- **“T” Position**



- **“W” Position**





- Corner Stretch – Start with your hand on a door frame and slowly walk forward. You should feel a stretch across the front of your chest.



- Wall Slides – start with your back on the wall, trying to keep your low back flat. Keep your arms positions on the wall as best as you can. Slide your arms up and over your head as high as possible without causing pain. If you are not able to keep the entire arm on the wall, try starting with just your fists on the wall.



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