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Shoulder and Elbow Surgery

Scapular Stabilization Exercises

Rhomboid



Position: prone with your head resting on a towel roll with your arms resting by your sides (on your tummy- you can place a pillow under your stomach, especially if you have current or a history of back pain). A towel roll is just an old, well-used bath towel rolled up tightly and taped securely.

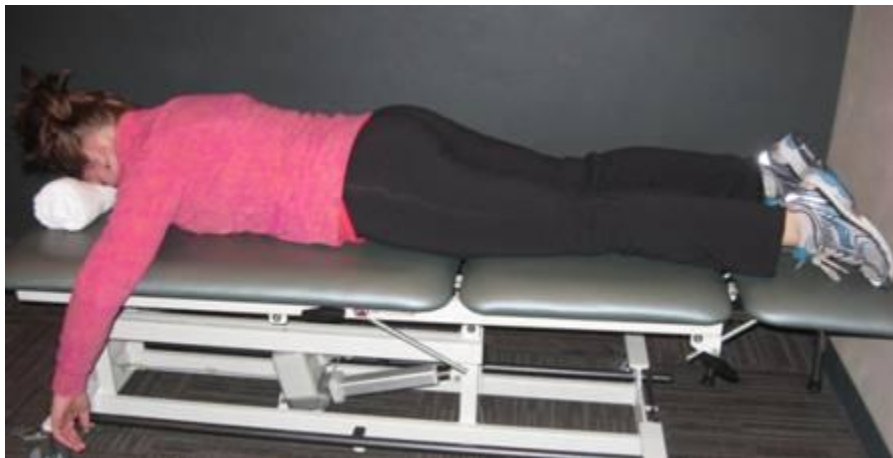
- 1)** Pull your shoulder blades down and back towards the small of your back (think of a diagonal pull towards the opposite back hip pocket for each scapula).
- 2)** Hold this position for 5 seconds. Hint: make sure you feel the muscles between the shoulder blades tighten; try not to use the muscles directly behind your shoulders- this is a common compensation and will not actually work your scap stabilizers.
- 3)** Relax. Repeat steps 1-2, and perform 2-3 sets of 15 reps.

Advanced Rhomboid Strengthening



Steps are the same as above, but now lift your arms after pulling your shoulder blades down and back instead of leaving them resting on the table and still hold for 5 seconds. Once this becomes easy for 2-3 sets of 15 without any compensation with upper trap (see directions above), you can add a 1# weight in each hand to increase the difficulty. Keep in mind quality is much better than quantity - no compensations!!

Middle Trap



Position: prone with your head resting on a towel roll with your arms resting on the floor in a T position (on your tummy- you can place a pillow under your stomach, especially if you have current or a history of back pain).

- 1)** Pull your shoulder blades down and back towards the small of your back (think of a diagonal pull towards the opposite back hip pocket for each scapula).
- 2)** Hold this position for 5 seconds. Hint: make sure you feel the muscles between the shoulder blades tighten; try not to use the muscles directly behind your shoulders- this is a common compensation and will not actually work your scap stabilizers. Also keep your upper traps relaxed (on the top of your shoulder next to your neck and ear).
- 3)** Relax. Repeat steps 1-2, 15x.

Advanced Middle Trap Strengthening



Steps are the same as above, but now lift your arms after pulling your shoulder blades down and back, instead of leaving them resting on the table and hold for 5 seconds. Once this becomes easy for 2-3 sets of 15 without any compensation with upper trap (see directions above), you can add a 1# weight in each hand to increase the difficulty. Keep in mind quality is much better than quantity - no compensations!!

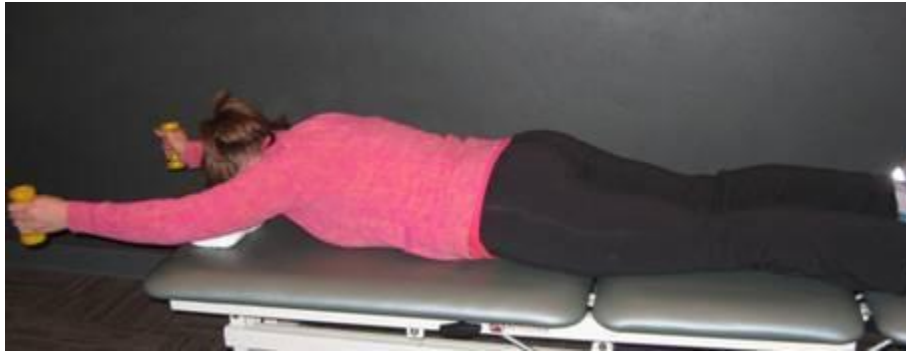
Lower Trap



Position: prone with your head resting on a towel roll with your arms resting on the floor in a Y position (on your tummy- you can place a pillow under your stomach, especially if you have current or a history of back pain).

- 1) Pull your shoulder blades straight down toward your feet; you should feel about one inch of movement of your shoulder blades down.
- 2) Hold this position for 5 seconds. Hint: Keep your upper traps relaxed (on the top of your shoulder next to your neck and ear).
- 3) Relax. Repeat steps 1-2, 15x.

Advanced Lower Trap Strengthening



Steps are the same as above, but now lift your arms after pulling your shoulder blades down, instead of leaving them resting on the table and hold for 5 seconds. Once this becomes easy for 2-3 sets of 15 without any compensation with upper trap (see directions above), you can add a 1# weight in each hand to increase the difficulty. Keep in mind quality is much better than quantity - no upper trap compensation whatsoever!!

The Prone "T" Scapular Stabilization Exercise



Lie face down and slowly raise your arm straight out to the side while pinching your shoulder blade back.. Brett Sears, 2011

To perform the prone "T" (prone means to lie face down), lie on your stomach on the edge of a bed and hang your arm straight down. You can support your head with your opposite hand on your forehead.

While keeping your arm straight, slowly lift your arm out to the side and pinch your shoulder blade back towards your spine. You should feel like one half of the letter "T." Hold this position for one to two seconds, and then slowly lower back to the starting position.

Repeat this exercise for 8 to 15 repetitions. Once you are done, move on to the next exercise.

The Prone "I" Scapular Stabilization Exercise



Lie face down and slowly raise your arm up towards the side of your ear.. Brett Sears, PT, 2011

Start the prone "I" in the same position as all the other scapular stabilization exercises. Simply lie on your belly with your arm hanging straight down. Keep your elbow straight and raise your arm up overhead. Your shoulder blade should slowly pinch back as you do this and your arm should be next to your ear at the uppermost position.

Hold the top position for one to two seconds, and then slowly return your arm to the starting position. Repeat this exercise 8 to 15 repetitions.