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What are you trying to do for fitness?

4 Week Shoulder Stability Super Circuit

The shoulder has many functions and injury isn't one of the intended ones. Often injury occurs while the shoulder is being stabilized but the small muscles in the shoulder are not strong enough. The body tries to adapt with compensations until the body can't compensate anymore and injury occurs. Just think of an example in your car where you are driving, then reach your arm into the back seat to pick something up and you can feel the weakness of the shoulder caused by deficiency in these small muscles.



Strengthening the shoulder can help prevent injury, allow more efficient movement and allow the strength levels in other exercises to increase because compensations are not needed anymore – this is especially true in individuals trying to increase their bench press.

Below are descriptions of simple exercises to strengthen the shoulder. While performing these exercises, it is important to use light weights and concentrate on the movement from the small muscles rather than the large ones.



1) **External Rotation** – Standing with arms down by side, bend the elbow 90 degrees until forearm is parallel to the ground with hand pointing straight ahead. Rotate the hand in towards the belly button while keeping the elbow beside your ribs. Grasp resistance tubing or handle of cable machine which is anchored across the body and level with the elbow. Rotate the arm out to the side away from the belly button under control and then back in to belly button under control.

2) **45 Degree Empty Can Shoulder Raises** – Standing with arms straight out from the shoulder and parallel to the ground, rotate the arm so the thumb is pointed to the ground. Now lower the arms to the hip with them 45 degrees from the shoulder, not straight out in front or to the side, but in the middle. Then raise back up under control and repeat.

3) **Straight Arm Shoulder Rotation** – Standing with arms straight out in front of body parallel to the ground and pointed straight ahead, turn palms towards the ground and move arms away from each other to form a “T” with the body and return to start and repeat.

4) **Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble** – Stand with one arm extended overhead with exercise ball between palm and wall. Vigorously and quickly dribble or slap the ball against the wall using the shoulder for movement, rather than the wrist or elbow. Then repeat with the other arm.

5) **Skydive Circles** – Lie on the ground face down with arms extended straight out in front of the body with the palms facing down. While keeping the arms extended, rotate the arms downward towards the sides in a large circular shape without touching the ground and rotate the palms upward when moving beside the buttocks. Then return to starting position in the same controlled large circular movement and repeat.

6) **Scapula Retraction** – Seated or standing hold handles of a cable or band with the arms extended straight out in front about shoulder height. Without bending the elbow, slowly retract the shoulders and pinch the shoulder blades together. Then slowly allow the tension to pull the arms back to the starting position.



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Workout Plan

Start with light weight dumbbells and/or light weight resistance bands/cable stacks. As you progress and are proficient with the exercise, then increase the weight appropriately. Throughout the exercises focus on using the small muscles for movement rather than the large ones and control the entire movement with slow controlled movement, except for on the Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble. Then after completing week four, consider altering the exercises, allowing time for recovery and then repeating thru the workout plan.

Week 1

- 1) External Rotation - 2 x 12
- 2) 45 Degree Empty Can Shoulder Raises – 2 x 12
- 3) Straight Arm Shoulder Rotation – 2 x 8
- 4) Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble - 2 x 25sec
- 5) Skydive Circles – 2 x 12
- 6) Scapula Retraction – 2 x 15

Week 2

- 1) External Rotation - 2 x 15
- 2) 45 Degree Empty Can Shoulder Raises – 2 x 15
- 3) Straight Arm Shoulder Rotation – 2 x 10
- 4) Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble - 2 x 35sec
- 5) Skydive Circles – 2 x 15
- 6) Scapula Retraction – 2 x 18

Week 3

- 1) External Rotation - 3 x 12
- 2) 45 Degree Empty Can Shoulder Raises – 3 x 12
- 3) Straight Arm Shoulder Rotation – 3 x 8
- 4) Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble - 3 x 25sec
- 5) Skydive Circles – 3 x 12
- 6) Scapula Retraction – 3 x 15

Week 4

- 1) External Rotation - 3 x 15
- 2) 45 Degree Empty Can Shoulder Raises – 3 x 15
- 3) Straight Arm Shoulder Rotation – 3 x 10
- 4) Ball Wall Slaps/Dribble - 3 x 35sec
- 5) Skydive Circles – 3 x 15
- 6) Scapula Retraction – 3 x 18