

SHOULDER STRETCHING

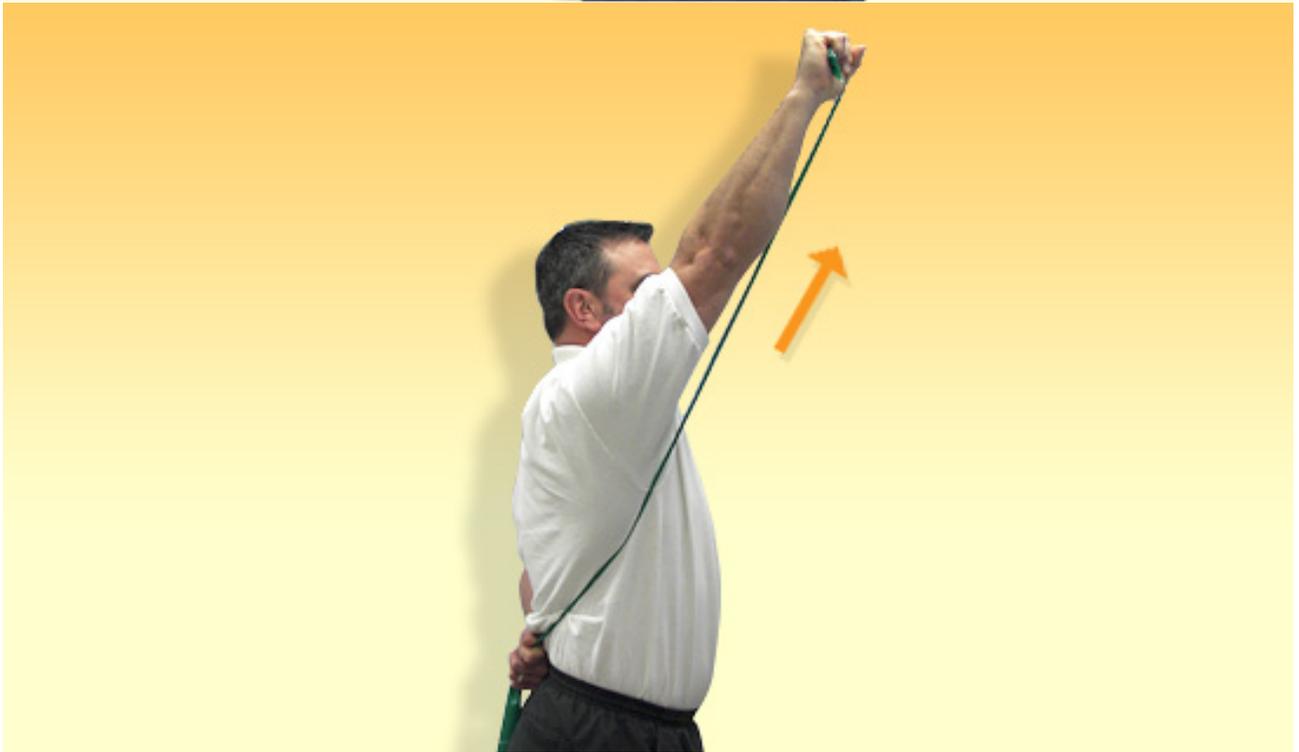
The following document is a compilation of shoulder stretches from several sources. These are for the un-injured and recovering shoulder. They should not be considered without medical advice for an injured shoulder.

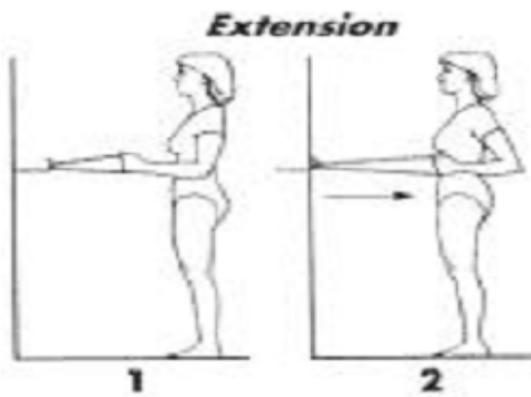
If any of the strength or stretching exercises cause aggravation or further aggravation to your shoulders, 1) lower the weight or lighten the band strength, 2) limit the range of motion to whatever you can complete pain free, 3) try the movement without any weight to see if the movement itself is causing the problem, 4) have someone familiar with the exercise check your form, and 5) see your doctor if, after 2-3 weeks, it does not improve somewhat with ice, rest, anti-inflammatories, stretching and strengthening.

Part 1: These stretches should be done between 5 and 10 times a week 24 times each with a light band for slight resistance.











Reaching-up Shoulder Stretch:
Place one hand behind your back and then reach up between your shoulder blades.



Arm-up Rotator Stretch: *Stand with your arm out and your forearm pointing upwards at 90 degrees. Place a broom stick in your hand and behind your elbow. With your other hand pull the bottom of the broom stick forward.*

Part 2: These stretches have descriptions to follow – please follow them closely.

Hold each for 30 seconds, and again, be cautious of pushing too hard into the stretch – the goal here should be to release tension in worked muscles, NOT cause any pain!



Door Jamb Chest Stretch: We recommend this stretch for climbers, computer programmers, bench press fanatics, or any other people who typically have forward-shoulder posture or sedentary sitting jobs. You need no equipment other than a door jamb, tree, or corner of a building. Extend your arm out from the torso at a right angle, and bend your elbow 90 degrees. Place your forearm against a wall (or do both at the same time, in a door jamb) and lean forward. You can even stagger your stance with one foot forward, if it feels more comfortable. Hold the stretch on each side for about 20-30 seconds. For optimal benefit, place this static stretch at the end of your workout before taking it to its limits.



Hug a Tree Stretch: This stretch feels heavenly after rotator cuff work and stretches the lats, obliques, arms, lower back and shoulders. It is a good one for most climbers, desk workers, and any other people who carry a lot of stress in the upper neck and back. Find a sturdy vertical surface (pictured, a squat rack, but a tree or coat rack might also do nicely) and grasp both hands around it, with feet about a foot away. Allow yourself to bend at the hips, butt back, until arms are straight, and allow your head to relax between the elbows. If you are also tight in the hamstrings you might feel a good stretch in the back of the legs.

Part 3: These are more advanced strength building exercises for the healthy shoulder. You should be doing these 3 or 4 times a week with coaches approval before.

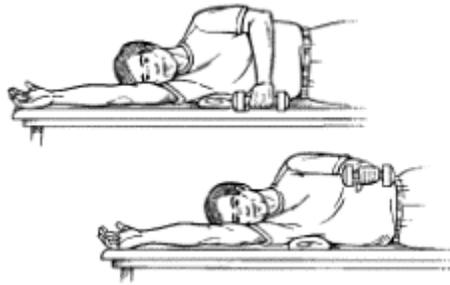
Exercise 1

Start by lying on your stomach on a table or a bed. Put your left arm out at shoulder level with your elbow bent to 90° and your hand down. Keep your elbow bent, and slowly raise your left hand. Stop when your hand is level with your shoulder. Lower the hand slowly. Repeat the exercise until your arm is tired. Then do the exercise with your right arm.



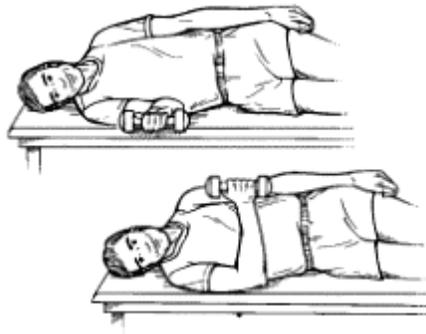
Exercise 2

Lie on your right side with a rolled-up towel under your right armpit. Stretch your right arm above your head. Keep your left arm at your side with your elbow bent to 90° and the forearm resting against your chest, palm down. Roll your left shoulder out, raising the left forearm until it's level with your shoulder. (Hint: This is like the backhand swing in tennis.) Lower the arm slowly. Repeat the exercise until your arm is tired. Then do the exercise with your right arm.



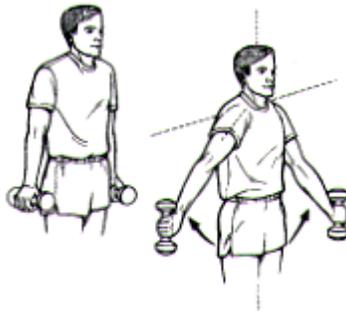
Exercise 3

Lie on your right side. Keep your left arm along the upper side of your body. Bend your right elbow to 90° . Keep the right forearm resting on the table. Now roll your right shoulder in, raising your right forearm up to your chest. (Hint: This is like the forehand swing in tennis.) Lower the forearm slowly. Repeat the exercise until your arm is tired. Then do the exercise with your left arm.



Exercise 4

In a standing position, start with your right arm halfway between the front and side of your body, thumb down. (You may need to raise your left arm for balance.) Raise your right arm until almost level (about a 45° angle). (Hint: This is like emptying a can.) Don't lift beyond the point of pain. Slowly lower your arm. Repeat the exercise until your arm is tired. Then do the exercise with your left arm.





1. **External Rotator on Knee:** To perform this exercise sit on a bench with foot propped on seat so that when you rest your elbow on the knee, the upper arm remains parallel to the floor. Start with your hand in the air, perpendicular to the floor, and slowly rotate your upper arm in an arc toward the midline of your body (keeping a right angle to the elbow) until your forearm is just above parallel to the floor. Exhale and arc the arm back up to vertical, repeat for 12-15 repetitions and then perform on the other arm, 1-3 sets each. If you anticipate that one arm is weaker than the other, complete the exercise with your weak arm first and only do the same number of reps on the strong arm as you can complete with good form on the first.



2. **Propped External Rotator:** For this exercise, sit on a bench with a barbell behind you so that your upper arm is parallel to the floor. Rest your elbow on the barbell and just as for the Knee exercise above, slowly lower the dumbbell until the upper arm is parallel to the floor and focus on contracting the small muscles in the back of the shoulder to lift the weight back to vertical. Be careful not to use so heavy a load that the weight pulls your hand too far down! Exhale on the lift and complete 12-15 repetitions, 1-3 sets each on both arms.



3. Side-Lying External Rotator: The final strengthening exercise to try for the external rotators is to lie on your side (on the floor or on a wide bench) with a towel or sweatshirt propped underneath your elbow to help keep it away from your hip and allow you to keep your arm at a right angle. Keep the elbow in that 90 degree position and exhale as you slowly raise the hand up toward the ceiling, stopping just shy of vertical to keep constant tension on the rotators rather than shifting the effort to the larger deltoid muscles. Slowly lower the weight back down toward your abdomen and repeat. If you feel yourself shifting your body back or taking a rest briefly at the top of the movement, lower the weight until you have a weight you can complete for 12-15 repetitions under constant tension, 1-3 sets on each arm.