

Shouldering the Load

Or shoulder the blame, or have a shoulder to cry on or even stand shoulder to shoulder with a comrade. Even a quick search of Google will show over 50 songs with the word shoulder in the title. No doubts about it, shoulders are awesome and hey, they're great for hanging accessories off of too such as backpacks, purses or laptop bags. But, shoulders can take a beating too.

Reportedly, over 20% of the general population suffers from shoulder pain with shoulder impingement being the most common diagnosis. Repetitive overhead movements and poor posture such as rounded shoulders or a forward head (text neck) can lead to muscle imbalance and put the shoulder at risk for being injured. Over time, the muscles that pull the shoulders back (serratus anterior, lower trapezius, subscapularis, and posterior rotator cuff) become weakened and unable to perform as intended and other muscles will have to pitch in to take up the slack.

Here is a simple shoulder assessment you can do right at home called the rotation test. Stand against a wall with your heels, butt and shoulders touching the wall. While a fitness or health professional will look for things such as shoulders coming off the wall, shoulders elevating or hands being too far from the wall at the completion of the rotation, I'll concentrate on just one—shoulders elevating as seen in the bottom right picture. This compensation shows potential overactive upper traps and levator scapulae and underactive rhomboids, mid and lower traps as well as rotator cuff muscles. You can use corrective exercise to help solve and create more range of motion at the shoulder.

In corrective exercise, the goal is to **inhibit** the tight muscles using self-myofascial release (ie. Foam roller or other object like a tennis or golf ball), **lengthen** tight muscles through static stretching, **activate** weakened muscles with strengthening exercises and finally **integrate** the lengthened and activated muscles in a full body exercise using proper form to re-educate the movement.

INHIBIT-Upper traps and levator scapulae using theracane (shown here) or golf ball



LENGTHEN-Chest, upper traps and levator scapulae. Hold for 30 seconds



ACTIVATE-Rhomboids and lower traps by doing a ball or floor cobra.



INTEGRATE-



Text Neck

Yes, it's a thing. Poor movement over time will lead to postural changes and muscle imbalances.



Shoulder Rotation Test

Rotate the arms toward the floor then rotate them back up against the wall. When rotating toward the floor, you should come within 20 degrees from the wall. You should be able to touch the wall when upwardly rotating. You should be able to do this without any compensating such as raising your shoulders or having your shoulders come off the wall. Any of these compensations may mean you have some imbalances to take care of.



Single leg deadlift with PNF pattern

Summers Coming

And outdoor activities are about to begin! Maintaining proper hydration becomes crucial. Be aware of the signs of dehydration:

- ➔ Dry mouth
- ➔ Increased thirst
- ➔ Fatigue
- ➔ Decreased urine output
- ➔ headaches
- ➔ Dry Skin
- ➔ Dizziness
- ➔ Lack of concentration

And let's not forget the kids. We may think of children as miniature adults but their bodies function in many different ways. One being the way they regulate their body temperatures.

Total body water and blood volume are lower in youths so there is less reserve for when fluid loss occurs. Youth also have a tendency to heat up faster because they have a higher metabolic rate and they are less efficient at dissipating heat.



All this adds up to the fact that you should be extra vigilant when taking little Tommy or Sally to soccer. Make sure they have water handy and watch for signs of dehydration.

VITAMIN D-The Sunshine Vitamin

It's important for bone health but the skin can make large amounts of this vitamin by exposing it to the sun. Exposing your skin to the sun for half the time it takes to burn 2-3 times per week and you're good!

Stretch of the Day-Biceps Femoris

Have you ever seen anyone walk with their feet turned out? Probably, as it is common and the strange thing is, it tends to be worse on the right foot. At least one reason for this, as the thought goes, is that driving puts the right foot in a rotated position and over time the right foot stays in that rotated position.

There are a couple muscles involved in this imbalance. One is the lateral side of your calf muscle and another is one of your hamstring muscles called the biceps femoris. Like other hamstring muscles, it flexes the knee but this muscle is also involved in externally rotating the tibia causing the foot to turn out. Lengthening this muscle can help alleviate the problem.



How To Do It

- Lie on the floor with legs flat
- Flex the hip 90 degrees and slightly pull thigh toward midline of the body while keeping the knee flexed.
- Place the opposite hand behind the knee of the leg being stretched.
- With the hand supporting the leg, extend the knee.
- Hold for 5 seconds and repeat for 5-10 repetitions.

Desserts of the Day

Raspberry Banana Ice Cream



Total Time: 5 hrs. 10 min.

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cooking Time: None

Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients:

1. 2 medium bananas, cut into chunks
2. ½ cup whole raw cashews
3. 1 cup hot water
4. 3 cups fresh (or unsweetened frozen) raspberries
Water (optional)

Preparation:

- ✓ 1. Place banana in plastic bag; freeze for 4 hours, or until completely frozen.
- ✓ 2. Place cashews in a medium bowl. Cover with water. Let stand for 30 minutes; drain.
- ✓ 3. Place drained cashews, frozen banana, and raspberries in blender; cover. Blend until smooth. Add water, 2 Tbsp. at a time, if needed for consistency.
- ✓ 4. Pour into a freezer-safe container; freeze until set.

Cranberry Granola Bars



Total Time: 42 min.

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cooking Time: 22 min.

Yield: 18 servings, 1 bar each

Ingredients:

1. 1 cup low-fat granola
2. 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
3. ½ cup whole wheat flour
4. 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
5. 1 large egg, beaten
6. 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
7. ¼ cup raw honey
8. ½ cup dried cranberries
9. ½ cup chopped walnuts

Preparation:

- ✓ 1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
- ✓ 2. Combine granola, oats, flour, and cinnamon in a large bowl; mix well. Set aside.
- ✓ 3. Combine egg, applesauce, and honey in a medium bowl; mix well.
- ✓ 4. Add oat mixture to egg mixture; mix until just blended.
- ✓ 5. Fold in cranberries and walnuts.
- ✓ 6. Spread mixture into 8 x 8-inch baking pan.
- ✓ 7. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes, or until firm.
- ✓ 8. Cut into 18 bars.