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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Exercises for Your Shoulder

Last week, I described one of the more common shoulder injuries – “rotator cuff tendinitis” or “supraspinatus tendinitis”. That article is available on our website: www.merrittchiro.com. To quickly review, there are four muscles of the rotator cuff. Three of them (infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis) function to pull the ball of the arm bone (humerus) downwards as the shoulder muscle (deltoid) raises the arm – see diagram 1. If these muscles are weak or injured, the ball of the humerus slides upward and jams into the bone (the acromion) above, causing pinching of the tendons and bursa between –see diagram 2.

This week I will show you a couple exercises that will strengthen and rehabilitate the weakened or damaged rotator cuff muscles –see diagram 3 and 4. If you cannot figure them out or if they cause pain, call me at my office for advice.

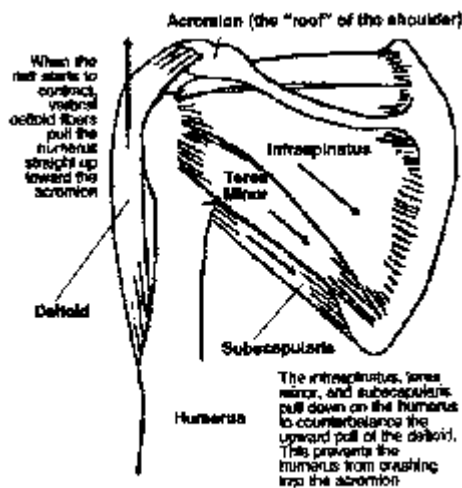


Figure 1

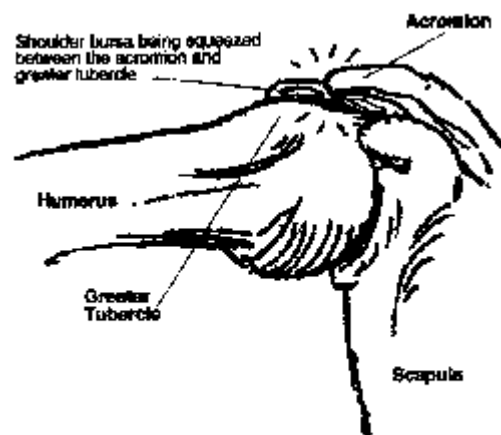


Figure 2

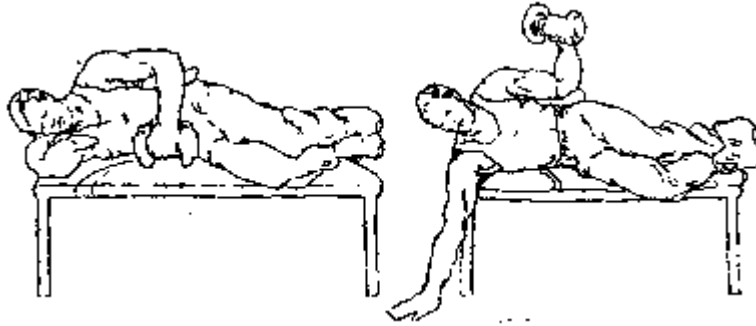


Figure 3 – Begin with your left elbow bent 90 degrees. It is very important that the elbow remains against your side throughout the entire exercise. Using only a one to three pound weight, rotate your arm so that your forearm raises as shown in the diagram. Then slowly lower your forearm back to the starting position. Repeat this movement until the shoulder becomes fatigued. Then flip over and do the same with the other arm. Repeat the exercise with each arm three times. This can be done each day.

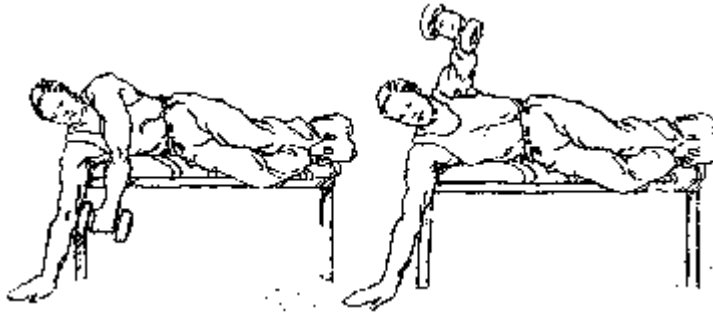


Figure 4 – While lying on your side, allow your straightened arm to hang down while holding onto a 5 to 8 pound weight. Slowly raise your entire arm upward as shown. Then slowly lower the arm back to the starting position. Repeat this movement until the shoulder becomes fatigued. Repeat this exercise with both shoulders three times. This can be done each day.

