

Shoulders define our stature. They influence our appearance far more than any other body part. Just as broad, well defined but relaxed shoulders are a sign of strength, self-confidence and contribute to your appearance, tight shoulder muscles, on the other hand, will cause discomfort and pain. Because of this, it is very important to train this body part with equal doses of strengthening and stretching exercises. The shoulder is a ball and socket joint. It is the most mobile joint in the body and therefore one of the most in danger of injury, especially dislocation. Because of this, it is important to secure its strength through specific exercises.

Guidelines for exercising the shoulders.

- Do not work with momentum; that means, don't swing. Stand firm & have control of your movement.
- Keep your shoulders down, pulled away from ears.
- When you contract, you exhale. When you release or relax, you inhale.
- Pay attention to how the hands are held during exercise. If you turn the hands outward or inward, you change the way the shoulder works. This can cause impingement, especially when the arms are brought overhead

Shoulder exercise- Rear Shoulder Stretch

Stand in neutral position. Clasp your hands behind your back. Keep the arms extended and pull them down. Hold for 20-30 seconds and shake out the arms.

Ex 1- Overhead Press with Bar

Hold the bar with palms down at chest height. Raise the bar upwards, keeping your relaxed not tensed. Slowly lower the arms. This exercise trains the middle shoulder muscle. Don't use your body to throw the weight up.

Ex 2- Side Lateral Raises with Tubing

Place the ball of the foot in the middle of the tubing. Pull your arms upward to the sides. Palms face down. Make sure that you do not lock your elbows but keep them soft. Stand steady and don't lean back. This exercise trains the middle shoulder muscle.

Ex 3-Upright Row with Tubing

Hold the handles of the tubing & step in the center of the tubing. Keep neutral body alignment. Pull the tubing up, keeping your elbows out and your shoulders down. Lower it down slowly to the starting position. When pulling the tubing up, try to lead with your elbows. This exercise trains the middle shoulder muscles.

Ex-4-Shoulder Stretch against the wall

Place one arm against the wall on your shoulder level parallel to the floor. Rotate to the opposite side till you feel a good stretch in your shoulder blade. Repeat it on the other arm.

Ex 6- Shoulder Raise with Hand Weights

Position: Standing or lying down on flat surface or inclined surface or sitting on a Swiss ball.

Works on Anterior Deltoid.

Method: Start with arms slightly bent, lift the weights in front of you to shoulder level. Your elbows are slightly bent while you control the movement in both directions.

Make sure your body is steady & upright as you lift your arm forward.

Maintain tight abdominals with your chest and head lifted.

Keep your elbows slightly bent & shoulders down.

Lift using your deltoids with your arm following their upward pull.

Lead with your elbow, not the weight or your hand- your arm & hand will be on an even plane with your shoulders at the top of the movement.

Relax your grip on the dumbbells as you return to the starting position.

Control your movement in both the directions.

Exhale as you lift up; inhale as you return to starting position

Ex 7-Lateral Arm Raise

Position: Standing or in Squat position or sitting on a Swiss ball.

Works on Medial Deltoid.

Method: Stand with your legs shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, head and chest lifted and abdominals tight. Holding one dumbbell in each hand, lift your arms to the sides, keeping your elbows slightly bent. Leading with your elbow, not the dumbbell, lift your arms to shoulder level. It is usually more effective to alternate arms with lateral raises.

Squeeze your lower trapezius together to minimize use of your trapezius and hunching of your shoulders upward. Use deltoid muscle. This will allow your middle deltoids to work harder to lift your arms to the side.

Lift using your deltoids- your arm follows the upward pull of the deltoids.

Lead with your elbow, not the weight or your hand.

Relax your grip on the dumbbell from time to time to allow the blood to flow through your forearm more effectively.

Exhale as you lift up; inhale as you return to starting position.

To add variety you can rotate the thumb downwards as you reach the top of the movement. This adds more definition to your deltoid muscles.

Ex-8-Posterior Deltoid Squeeze

Position: Squat or sit on a step or Swiss ball.

Works on Posterior Deltoids, Rhomboids, Trapezius.

Sit on the step, holding a dumbbell in each hand, and lean forward from your hips.

Maintain a straight back with abdominals tight, and your head in a neutral position as you lean forward. Place your hands under your legs and slightly behind your heels.

Lift the weights out to your sides, keeping your elbows bent and pointing towards the ceiling. Imagine a string is attached to your elbows and the ceiling, and it is pulling

your elbows upward. Keep your wrists strong and in neutral position. As you reach the end of your upward & outward movement, squeeze your shoulder blades together to increase the activity of your rhomboid muscles. Your rhomboids are very important muscles for maintaining correct, upright posture and are vital muscles to work. They help prevent rounding of the upper back and are the opposing muscle group for the pectorals. Exhale as you lift up; inhale as you return to the starting position.

Ex 9-Overhead Press

Position: Standing or sitting on a Swiss ball.

Works on Deltoids & Trapezius.

Method: Take weights in your hands on shoulder level. Palms face forward. Elbows are bent. From here extend the arms up. So the weights go overhead. Exhale on the way up & inhale on the way down. Make sure you do not lock the elbows on the way up. Keep them soft.

Ex 10Overhead Press with Tubing

Sit with straight back on bench or in a chair; leaning slightly forward. Pass the tubing under the bench or chair. Hold the tubing handles securely at shoulder height, with knuckles towards the ceiling. Extend the arms slightly forward and upwards. Exhale on the way up and inhale on the way down. Also concentrate when you lower the tubing down.