

Scapular Stabilization Exercises

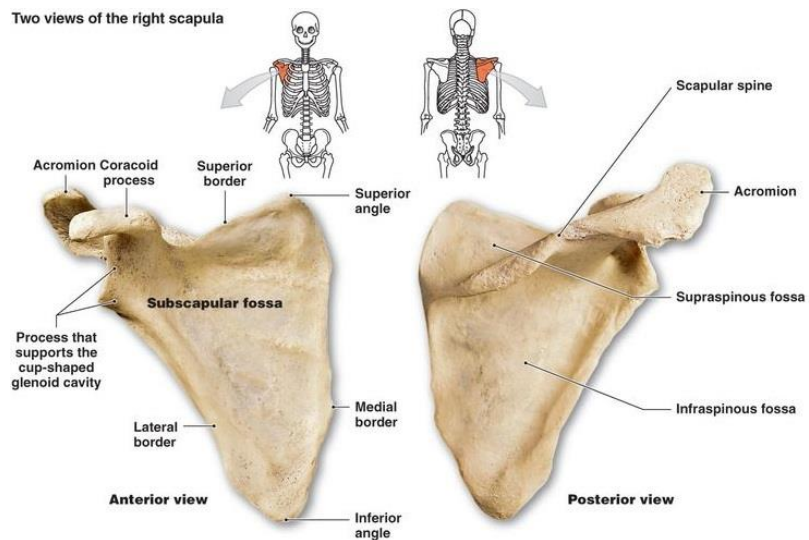
The scapula, the largest bone of your shoulder girdle, connects the humerus to the clavicle. The serratus anterior and rhomboid muscles hold this bone flat against the rib cage. Damage to these muscles can lift your scapula, a condition referred to as 'winging'. Winging can occur on one or both of your shoulders where the winged scapula protrudes outwards. Proper Scapular stabilization exercises can help strengthen your serratus anterior and rhomboid muscles, which in turn will protect your scapula from long term damage.

Scapular Stabilization Exercises

Swimmers are often susceptible to scapular injuries due to their requirement of performing powerful swimming strokes. Overhead arm movements during

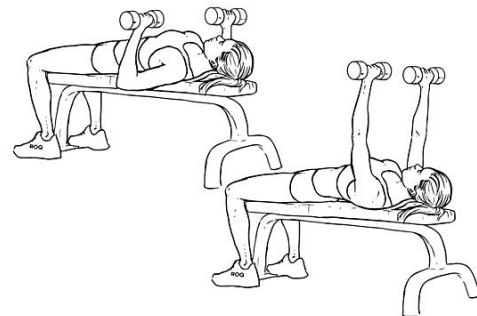
swimming results in scapular injuries, leading to a condition called swimmer's shoulders. The common people too are very susceptible to this problem, so here is a list of exercises that can be performed to stabilize the scapula:

Two views of the right scapula



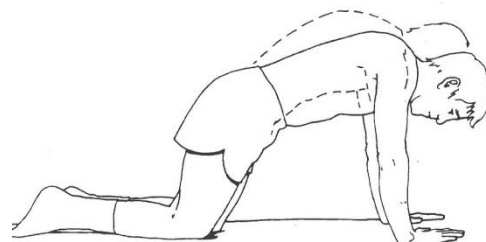
1. Lying Dumbbell Presses

- Lie on your back on a bench or on the floor holding a light dumbbell in each hand. Extend your arms vertically with palms facing inwards.
- Next, push your arms further upwards keeping them parallel to each other such that your shoulder blades separate.
- Go back to the initial position and perform between 10 and 20 repetitions of the exercise. Increase the number of repetitions with practice.



2. Push-Up Plus

- Hold yourself in a push-up position: here, your body is horizontal, facing downwards, arms



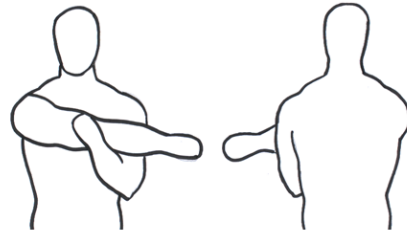
extended with your shoulders wide apart. Keep your head in a straight line with your spine.

- Extend your shoulders to the front and squeeze your shoulder blades to bring yourself up. Keeping your arms extended, let gravity bring you back to the original position. Repeat the workout 10-20 times daily.

3. Rhomboids Stretch

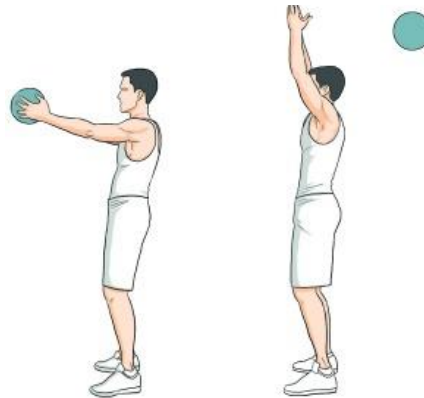
Rhomboides major and minor are two important muscles that anchor the scapula in place. It is thus necessary to strengthen these muscles to keep the shoulder girdle in a functional state.

- First place your right arm under your left shoulder and then place your left arm over your right shoulder and feel the stretch.
- Hold this position in 10 seconds and then relax. Perform 10 repetitions for each arm twice each day.



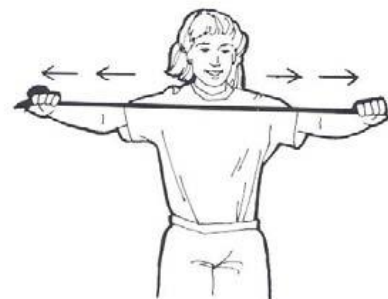
4. Shoulder Circumference with a Ball

- To perform scapular stabilization exercises like this one, you will need a ball resembling a tennis ball. The ball should be easy to grip, fit into your hands and easy to move.
- With the ball in your affected arm, perform circular, pendular and up and down motions with the ball keeping your elbows straight.
- Keep moving the ball continuously for a minute and then rest for the next minute. Repeat the exercise 10 times daily.



5. Band Pull-Aparts

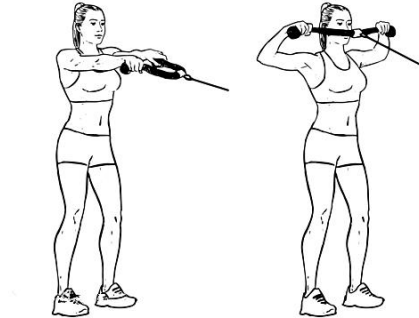
- Holding an exercise band in your hands, raise your arms to shoulder level.
- Slightly bend your elbows and keep your shoulders relaxed during the entire exercise regime.
- Stretch the band across your chest keeping your arms parallel to the chest.
- Repeat this exercise several times. Gradually upgrade your exercise level by using stronger bands. This exercise is great for working the rhomboids, posterior deltoids and the middle trapezius.



6. Face Pulls

Face pulls also serve the same purpose as a band pull-apart.

- Stand facing an adjustable pulley placed slightly above your head level. Grasp one end of a rope handle (attached to the pulley clip) in each arm and step back till your arms are completely outstretched.
- Starting at your elbows, bend your arms towards either side of your head while keeping your torso straight and your abdomen braced during the entire exercise regimen.
- Extend your arms again and repeat the above steps several times.



7. Pendulum Swings

The pendulum swings scapular stabilization exercise is great for working a large number of muscles like the deltoids, subscapularis, rotator cuffs and supraspinatus and infraspinatus muscles.

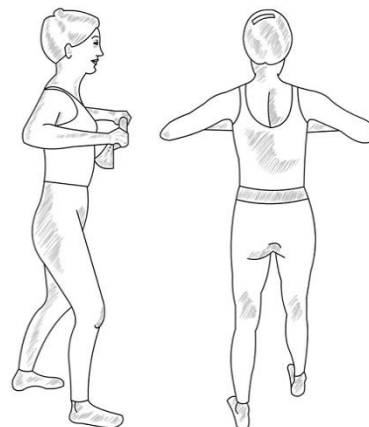
- Lean on a table placing one of your hands on the table for support.
- Swing the other hand 10-12 times both in the backward-forwards direction and laterally. Also swing the arm clockwise and anti-clockwise.
- Repeat the same steps with your other arm.



8. Shoulder Blade Squeeze

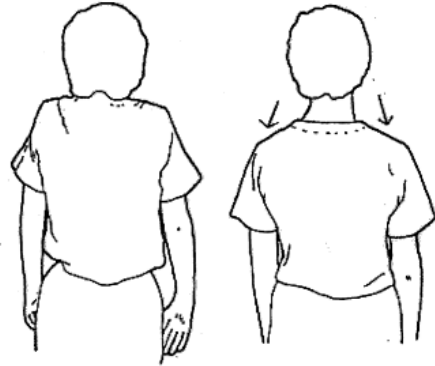
This is also one of the effective scapular stabilization exercises that can really help. To perform the exercise:

- Stand or sit down, but keep your back and neck straight.
- Lower your chin a bit and slightly move back your shoulders. In this position, squeeze back your shoulder blades till the limit where you feel a moderate stretch.
- Hold your shoulders in this position for 5 seconds and repeat the exercise 10 times. Remember, you should not feel any pain while performing the exercise.



9. Shoulder Blade Shrug

- Stand keeping your back and neck straight. Keep your arms laterally and a slight distance away from your body with the palms facing forwards.
- Start lifting your shoulder blades gently towards your ear ensuring you do not feel any pain during the exercise.
- Hold yourself in this position for 5 seconds and repeat the steps 10 times.



10. Shoulder Blades Forwards Against Wall

- Hold your hands against the wall while keeping your back and neck straight. In this position, your shoulder blades should be completely squeezed and elbow should not be bent with you leaning slightly towards the wall.
- Gradually change position by relaxing your shoulder blades (by lengthening your arms). Hold for 2 seconds in this position and again go back to the initial position.
- Repeat the exercise 10 times and make sure it is pain free.



11. Darts

- Lie face down on your stomach and place your arms laterally. During this exercise, your palms may face upwards or downwards.
- Squeeze your shoulder blades together while you gently lift your chest and hands off the ground.
- After reaching your maximum convenient height, hold for 2 seconds in that position and then return back to the original position.
- Repeat the above steps of scapular stabilization exercises 10-20 times, provided it is pain free.

