

Balancing Act!

Exercise to Relieve Shoulder Pain

Do you suffer from shoulder pain? Just 2 minutes of exercise per day can reduce that pain, say researchers from the National Research Center for the Working Environment in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Researchers analyzed neck and shoulder pain and muscle strength in 198 office workers. The individuals were then split into three groups: a 2-minute exercise protocol five times per week, a 12-minute exercise protocol five times per week and a no-exercise control. At the end in the 10-week intervention, the individuals in both exercise protocols felt less pain and tenderness.



Rick Olderman, MSPT, author of the *Fixing You* series of books, believes that neck and shoulder pain are the result of poor scapular function. “Scapular dysfunction is prevalent because [the scapulae] sit on the back of our trunk and aren’t adequately addressed by most exercise programs, or in our daily routines,” Olderman adds.

Here are two of Olderman’s favorite exercises to help ease shoulder and neck pain:

All-Fours Rocking Stretch. Begin on hands and knees, and rock back onto your heels while keeping your hands in the original position. Allow your shoulders to passively drift toward your ears. This restores scapular elevation, abduction and upward rotation while stretching muscles that counter these movements.

Arm Slides on the Wall. Begin by facing a wall, with elbows bent and pinky sides of the hands against the wall. Slide your hands up the wall. Once your elbows reach shoulder height, gradually elevate the scapulae (shrug shoulders). To bring them down, keep shoulders elevated until the elbows return to shoulder height, and then allow the shoulders to descend slowly along with the arms.