

Healthy Upper Back: Exercises

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How to do the exercises

Figure 1

Lower neck and upper back (rhomboid) stretch



1. Sit in a firm chair, or stand tall.
2. With your arms about shoulder height, clasp your hands in front of you.
3. Drop your chin toward your chest.
4. Reach straight forward so you are rounding your upper back. Think about pulling your shoulder blades apart. You'll feel a stretch across your upper back and shoulders.
5. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Figure 2

Child's pose



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1. Kneel on the floor, and sit back on your ankles. If it bothers your knees when you sit back, you can place a pillow or folded blanket between your ankles and your bottom.
2. Lean forward, place your hands on the floor, and stretch your arms out in front of you. Rest your head between your arms.
3. Gently push your chest toward the floor, reaching as far in front of you as you can.
4. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Figure 3

Shoulder roll



1. Stand or sit up straight, with your chin slightly tucked.
2. Keep your arms relaxed. All motion will be in your shoulders.
3. Roll your shoulders up, then back, then down, and then forward in a smooth, circular motion. Repeat at least 2 to 4 times.
4. Then go the other direction. Press your shoulders down, then back, then up, and then forward in a smooth, circular motion. Repeat at least 2 to 4 times.

Figure 4

Wall push-up

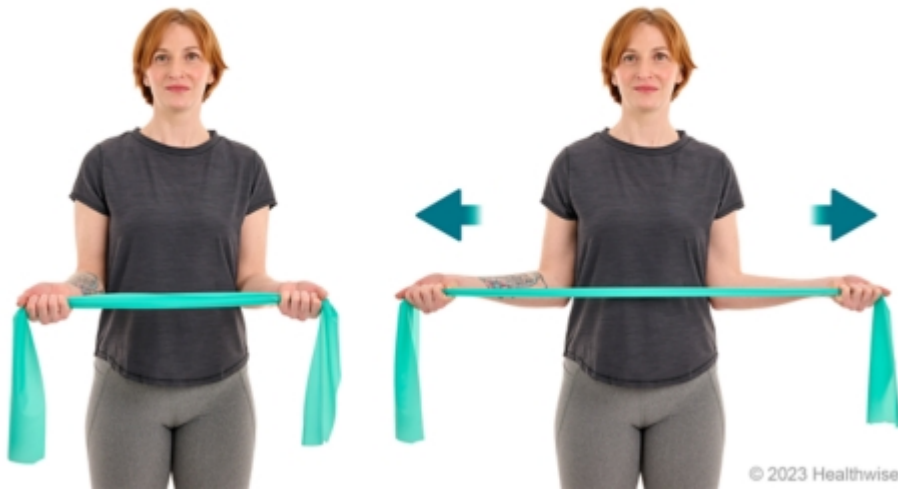


1. Stand facing a wall with your feet about 12 to 24 inches from the wall. If you feel any pain when you do this exercise, stand closer to the wall.
2. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height, slightly wider apart than your shoulders. Turn your fingers out a little, rather than straight up and down.
3. Slowly bend your elbows and bring your face toward the wall, keeping your shoulders and hips lined up. Then slowly push back to the starting position. Keep the motion smooth and controlled.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

When you can do this exercise against a wall with ease and no pain, you can try it against a counter. You can then slowly progress to the end of a couch, then to a sturdy chair, and finally to the floor.

Figure 5

Resisted shoulder-blade squeeze (elbows bent)



1. Sit or stand, holding an exercise band in both hands in front of you. Keep your elbows close to your sides, bent at a 90-degree angle. Your palms should face up.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and move your hands to the outside, stretching the band. Keep your elbows at your sides.
3. Slowly return to your starting position.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Figure 6

Resisted row



1. Anchor an exercise band at about waist level. You can loop the band around a solid object, like a bedpost or handrail. Or you can tie a knot in the middle of the band and shut a door on the band so the knot is on the other side of the door. (Or you can have someone hold one end of the loop to provide resistance.)
2. Stand or sit facing where you have placed the band. Hold one end of the band in each hand.
3. Hold your arms out in front of you. Adjust your hold on the band so you have some tension on it.
4. With your shoulders relaxed, pull the bands back, and move your shoulder blades toward each other. Your elbows will pass along your waist.
5. Slowly return to the starting position.
6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Credits for Healthy Upper Back: Exercises

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Clinical Review Board

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