

Rotator Cuff Strengthening Program

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Baseball has a very strenuous effect on the shoulder region. Years of throwing can and often have a deleterious effect on the support structure of the shoulder. It has become increasingly important that youth baseball players take a serious stance on strength training of the shoulder region to reduce the possibility of injury. The off-season is a perfect time to consider shoulder strengthening. This is important for pitchers and positional players as well and all members of the team will benefit from having increased shoulder strength prior to the start of the season.

The Rotator Cuff is comprised of 4 separate muscles which provide stability for the shoulder and shoulder region. This group of muscles provide stability and help protect the shoulder from injury during the act of throwing a ball. The important thing to remember when training for the shoulder is that the small muscles of the Rotator Cuff are just as important as the bigger muscles. It is imperative that we as baseball players train for strength and muscular endurance to help prevent over-use injuries of the shoulder region.

The following exercises are designed to be done with resistance tubing or resistance bands. Bands and resistance tubes can be purchased at most sporting good stores or at local PT offices. Light weights or cuff weights may also be used. This program should be done in combination with a strength program focusing on the legs and core as well. It is important to allow muscle recovery post training and therefor is recommended to be completed 3-4x/week during the off-season with one day of rest in between and reducing to 1-2x/week during the season more as a warm up for the shoulder. This is a beginner program and it is important for the athlete to learn correct technique rather than increase load to try and bulk up.

First 3 exercises begin with the athlete standing in the middle of the exercise band or tubing holding one end of the band in each hand. Slightly bend your knees, tighten your stomach, maintain straight back position.

1. With your palms facing backward, slowly raise your arms forward to level of shoulder height. Hold this position for a 2 count then slowly lower back to start position. Complete 2x12-15 reps.
2. With your palms facing forward, slowly raise your arms out to the side with your thumbs up to the level of the shoulder. Hold for a 2 count then slowly lower back to the start position. Complete 2x12-15 reps.
3. With palms facing backward, slowly raise your arm in front of you at a 45 degree angle (half way between straight forward and straight out to the side). Raise to level of shoulder height, hold for a 2 count and slowly lower back to start position. Complete 2x12-15 reps

4. Anchor band or tube around door knob. Standing facing the anchor point of your band grab each end in your hands. Pull the band ends back toward your body bringing your hands next to your rib cage pinching your shoulder blades together. Hold for 2 sec count then slowly relax shoulders. Repeat 2x12-15 reps.
5. Anchor band or tube around door knob. Stand with your right shoulder facing the door. Hold each end of your band in each hand. Bend elbows to 90 degrees keeping your elbows tucked into the body. Slowly rotate your left hand outward and your right hand inward maintaining your elbows next to your body. Repeat with your left shoulder facing the door. Complete 2x15-20 reps on each side.
6. Anchor band or tube around door knob. Stand facing anchor point, raise both shoulders up to the side at 90 degrees. Slowly pull hands backward keeping elbow up and level with shoulders until you have a "L" position. Repeat 2x15-20 for each shoulder. Turn to face away from your anchor position. Elevate arms up to 90 degree angle, slowly pull your palms forward to horizontal position. Repeat 2x15-20 each shoulder.

Try to focus on slow, controlled motions with no pain or jerking motions. Keep your shoulder blades pinched and quiet while you are doing your exercises. Complete all exercises slowly and under control. You should never feel pain while you are doing your exercises. Please seek medical attention if you experience pain or loss of ROM with any of these exercises. Never complete the exercise if your shoulder is already painful or limited in motion without discussing with a medical practitioner.