

# A GUIDE TO SAFELY MOBILIZE AND BULLETPROOF YOUR SHOULDERS

BY  
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SIMPLE   
**SHOULDER  
SOLUTION**

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Password: “simple”

# INTRODUCTION

Even though the combination of the main movements and accessory drills in Ultimate Athleticism will take almost any relatively non-broken pair of shoulders from pathetic to bulletproof, there are still a few stones left unturned when it comes to improving shoulder mobility.

This book was born out of a need to get a person's shoulders functioning optimally before making them incredibly strong using the skills found in Ultimate Athleticism. The Simple Shoulder Solution provides you with a foundation that will allow you to pursue any form of activity your heart desires without fear of injury.

The general philosophy embodied by this guide is inspired mainly by simplicity and strength of movement.

When evaluating a shoulder realize that different people are going to respond favorably to different things. Think of this manual as a checklist for things you can evaluate and movements you can test out. You'll find along the way that thoracic mobility may be your biggest issue and that thoracic rotation helps you improve your shoulder mobility the most—or they could do absolutely nothing for you. You may also find that one arm hangs seem to fix everything. This is the challenge, but it is imperative that you consider each person as completely individual. The end result, of course, is to have full movement quality.

### DEFINING MOVEMENT QUALITY

Movement quality, as I am defining it, is “joint range of motion plus coordination.”

This simple definition not only lays a foundation for our approach to improving shoulder health and performance, but also shows the qualities we are looking to specifically improve.

### NEVER JUST STRETCH

One common problem when it comes to getting and retaining new shoulder movement is the lack of a follow up movement to lock it in. When you gain a new range of motion, that’s awesome, but you need to do something to keep it there. So even if you do some isometrics in a new position, you should also do some circles, and eventually a full integrated movement like a Skin the Cat, L-Sit to Handstand or a Bottom Up Kettlebell Press. Get it, keep it, and integrate it. This is imperative if you’re looking for long term movement reeducation.

The goal is to open the shoulders using gravity and your own strength dynamically. Doing things actively is crucial for creating new neural pathways to retain the newly gained range of motion. Any use of a passive stretch should be immediately followed by an active mobility drill to maintain the new ROM.

### **DONT TRAP YOURSELF**

One common problem that only exacerbates movement issues is a set of hypertonic upper traps. Typically these muscles want to help out doing the job that your lower traps and scapular muscles should be doing. Try to be aware of this during not only your mobility drills, but any strength exercises you plan on doing. Don't let those upper traps do all the work especially when reaching the arms overhead into shoulder flexion.

### **EVALUATE AND RE-EVALUATE**

In order to use a map, you need two things. Your start point, typically marked with an arrow that says "you are here" and a target of where you want to go. If you are missing either of those the map is practically worthless. When it comes to improving the health and strength of your shoulders, you need to have a baseline to compare against. This is critically important to determine the effectiveness of the drills you are implementing.

This can actually be done quite simply by evaluating your shoulder range of motion before and after each drill you do. From here you can identify what makes you better, what makes you worse, or what has no apparent effect. The key is to emphasize movements that make you better.

**To perform a simple self-evaluation, you can do one of the following:**

1. Abduct your arms with palms forward.
2. Abduct your arms with palms facing behind you.

The first option will work great for many people, the second will be necessary if your shoulders have a tendency to be very flexible in the overhead position already. Don't strain, just see if what you did made the shoulder movement better--it should be obvious. A short term improvement is a clue that continued performance of an activity will lead to long term improvement. We all have different shoulders, bones, and joint architecture, so it is imperative that you test these movements on yourself as an individual if you want to make fantastic progress.

### **HOW MANY REPS?**

The goal of performing these exercises is to enhance movement. For some people it may take more repetitions to unlock new movement. The main rule is to avoid excessive fatigue and make the movements as smooth as possible. Using this as your guide, you can do as few as 5 or upwards of 20 repetitions of the movements.



# BREATHING

You can't survive unless you breathe. You breathe between 15,000 and 25,000 times every day based on your activity level.

A dysfunctional breathing pattern will yield a lack of core stability, lack of shoulder stability, lack of hip stability, hypertonic upper trapezius muscles, and stress, anxiety, depression, etc (seriously the list goes on).

Proper breathing improves performance, flexibility, posture, and massages your internal organs. It simply makes you better at everything.

Let's take a step back and go over some of the implications specific to the shoulder. The main issues here are excessive tension and stiffness in the neck and thoracic spine, and a lack of scapular and core stability all due to a dysfunctional breathing pattern.

This can be a major problem, but can also be a relatively simple fix.

As of this writing there are too many different ideas and techniques to improve breathing to even get a fair count. Many come from yoga, a "fad" exercise program that has been fashionable for the past 5,000 years. One thing experts agree on is to focus on breathing, so that's what we're going to do.

## BOX BREATHING:



1. Initially we want to set up in the optimal breathing position which will be laying down on the floor with legs at 90 degrees, calves on a chair or couch. Eventually we want to be mindful of this breathing in all positions and activities—the more you practice, the more it will stick.
2. Put a hand on your stomach and one on your chest.
3. Breathe through the nose only, and attempt to move the bottom hand but not the top one. Envision expanding your pelvis with your breath in 3D.
4. Start with a 4 count inhale and exhale and work up to an 8 count for each. So you would inhale for 4-8 seconds and

exhale for 4-8 seconds. Make sure you exhale fully on each repetition.

**5.** Repeat for 1-3 minutes.

Make sure you evaluate your movement before and after (any shoulder evaluation or even a toe touch will do). In some cases I've seen improvements of over 10 inches on a standard shoulder mobility evaluation with this breathing exercise alone.

As I mentioned before, there are tons of different breathing techniques—this one above provides bang for your buck with the least amount of coaching.

# CORE

The shoulder is a complex area that relies heavily on the neighbors to do their job properly. When there is dysfunction nearby, the shoulder is going to take the brunt of the problem. One very common problem that leads to shoulder dysfunction is a lack of proper core activation, especially of the oblique which is the lynchpin of the lateral chain. If the oblique does not provide the necessary stability for the shoulder to move upon, there is going to be a problem. A side plank can often ameliorate the problem.

Be sure with the below lateral chain core activation movements that the shoulder stays down and the Lat is engaged

### **SIMPLE SIDE PLANK WITH SHOULDER MOBILIZATION COMBO:**





Set up in a side plank on the elbow. Using the free hand, hold a 5lb plate (or appropriate weight) and perform arm raises to the front and overhead in two separate movements. The latter should actively stretch the shoulder into abduction.

## 1-ARM PLANK/SIDE PLANK COMBO:



Starting in a 1-arm plank, pivot on the feet until you transition to a side plank position. Control the movement back and forth for slow repetitions. Repeat on other side.



## 1-ARM HANG ROTATIONS:



Starting from a 1-arm hang on a suspension trainer, rotate the upper body so that it faces away at a 90 degree angle (like a hanging side plank). Use the strength of the scapula to pull the body back to horizontal. Repeat for controlled repetitions and then switch sides.

# THORACIC SPINE & NECK

When it comes to shoulders, we can't possibly have the conversation without addressing issues in the thoracic spine.

For simplicity's sake, imagine that the shoulders plug directly into the thoracic spine. If the thoracic spine is locked up, so will be the shoulders. Or worse yet, the shoulders will overcompensate by being hyper-mobile. When you take the most mobile joint in the entire body (glenohumeral joint) and make it extra mobile, this is when you get injuries.

### THORACIC MOBILITY

**The simple way to look at the thoracic spine is that there are 4 general ways to mobilize it:**

1. Rotations (twist)
2. Extension/Flexion
3. Lateral Flexion (side to side)
4. Circles (combination of extension/flexion and lateral flexion)

We are going to want to do these movements in any positions we can. The easiest and most bang for your buck will be the following:

## STANDING:



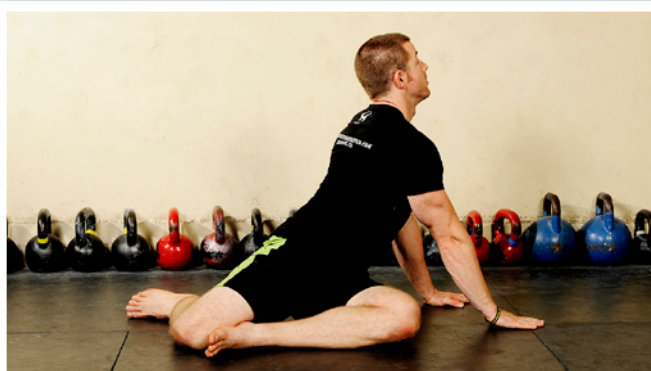
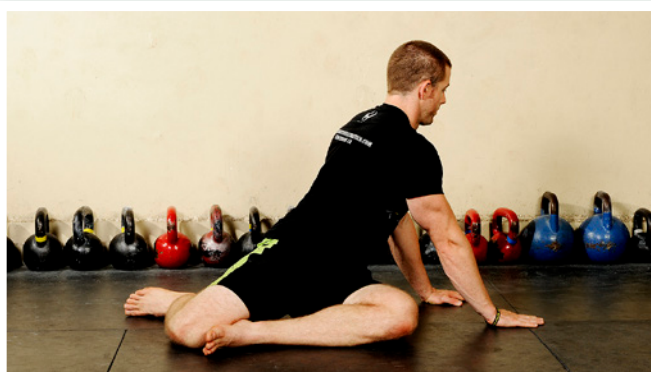
Fundamental posture in life and lifting, being able to coordinate thoracic movement from a standing position is not easy at first, but provides good value and you can continue to practice anywhere.

## QUADRUPED:



The hands-and-knees position is going to make it much easier to perform thoracic movements as well as the scapular movements described later in this manual.

## 90-90:



Also referred to as a shinbox in martial arts, this position is terrific for helping facilitate a good thoracic twist and is the easiest to implement for all levels.

## THORACIC BRIDGES:



One of the best bang for your buck movements a person can do—the Thoracic Bridge combines thoracic rotation and glute activation. It's a gold standard cure-all for shoulders, hips, and T-Spine. If you had to pick one movement, this is the one.

There are many ways to set up for a thoracic bridge. The easiest is to start in a side plank on the hand. From here take the top leg and reach it behind you to plant the foot flat on the floor.

The other leg will still be on the floor on the outside edge of the foot. Move this foot until you are in a squat stance with the chest still facing the wall and the bottom shoulder locked in the socket. Bridge the hips up high, facilitating the trunk rotation. Focus on the same side hip of the arm that is posted on the floor, this will have a tendency

to drop when the spine is not flexible, the hips are tight, or the glute is weak.

### WINDSHIELD WIPERS:



Start by laying face up on the floor with arms straight out to side. Then while keeping knees together (may help to squeeze a yoga block between knees), bring the knees to one elbow while keeping the opposite shoulder on the floor. Transition back and forth alternating sides each rep.

Once you have successfully mobilized your T-spine, we want to lock in that pattern...



## ACTIVATION:

These drills are going to give you more active control of the new range of motion acquired by the previous thoracic mobilizations. Building this mind-muscle connection is imperative for retaining the new range of motion.

## THORACIC ROTATIONS:

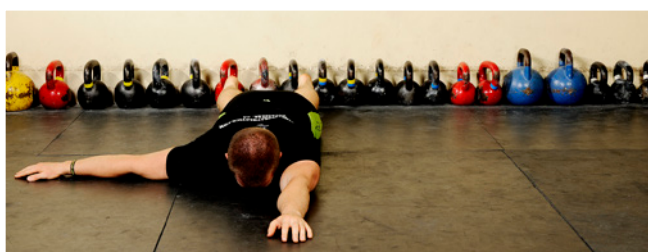
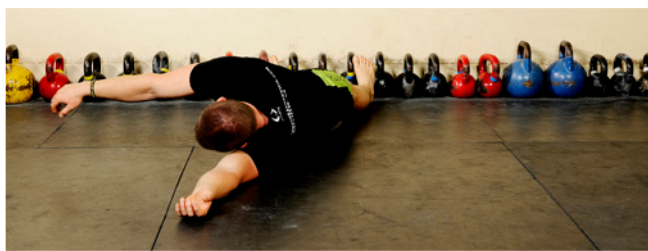


From a quadrupedal or plank position with feet slightly apart reach one arm up into the air while rotating the torso. Keep the hips level. It may be helpful to think about driving the same side hip toward the

floor. (If you are reaching the right arm up, focus on keeping the right hip down toward the floor.) The plank variation will require more demand from the core and should be done after the quadruped version can be done well.

### SOFT ROLLING:

One thing that often gets overlooked is the ability to actively articulate each vertebra in rotation throughout the spine. One thing that can address this is soft rolling.



# SIMPLE SHOULDER SOLUTION



Start by laying down on your back with both arms overhead. From here, using only 1 arm and your head, lift your head up and look toward the opposite armpit while reaching your arm across. The legs must stay relaxed. It will feel challenging and slow at first, but don't rush, use momentum, or push your legs into the ground. Once rolled over onto your stomach, reverse the motion by looking back up across and reaching your arm up and behind you out to the side. Using the same rules as before (no leg movement or momentum) roll yourself back over to your back. Repeat on both sides and note which is most challenging. Spend extra time working that specific movement.

### **CHECK YOUR NECK:**

**The Neck moves similar to the Thoracic Spine, so lets apply the same 4 mobilizations:**

1. Rotations (twist)
2. Extension/Flexion
3. Lateral Flexion (side to side)
4. Circles (combination of extension/flexion and lateral flexion)

One thing to keep in mind during all of your movements is to keep the neck relaxed and long. You should be able to perform smooth neck rotations in any of the positions. This encourages good posture and prevents the neck musculature from being used hyperactively during movements it was not meant to perform.

# SIMPLE SHOULDER SOLUTION



# SCAPULA

## SCAPULAR MOVEMENTS:

The movement of the scapula is hugely important. With the scapula, strength and flexibility go hand in hand—what we are really looking for here is coordination. Being able to perform a smooth, controlled circle with the scapula in a variety of positions is the key to scapular control. Start out in easier positions such as standing and quadruped. Get comfortable with protraction, retraction, elevation, and depression before moving on to circles.

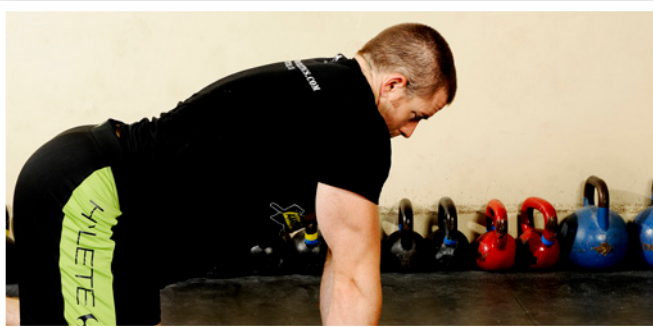
## PROTRACTION/RETRACTION:



## ELEVATION/DEPRESSION:

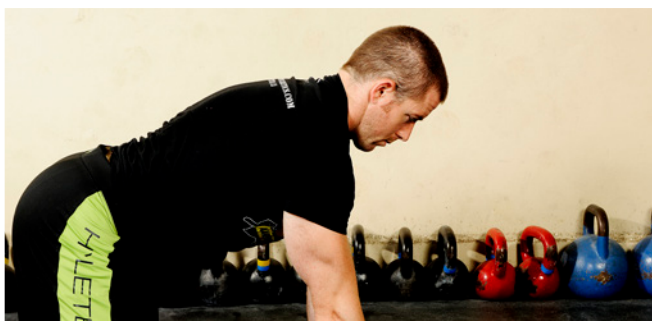


## CIRCLES:





# SIMPLE SHOULDER SOLUTION



Starting in a quadruped position is by far the easiest because there is little load and feedback from the ground. Be sure not to bend the elbows accidentally as this is an undesirable compensation.

Master the movements in quadruped and then progress to loaded variations to build strength and coordination in different vectors. Start by holding the loaded positions and add controlled protraction, retraction, elevation, and depression. Advance to circles and 1-arm variations over time.

### HORIZONTAL LOADING:

#### STRAIGHT ARM ROW HANG



#### PUSHUP HOLD



### 1-ARM ROW HANG



### 1-ARM PUSHUP HOLD

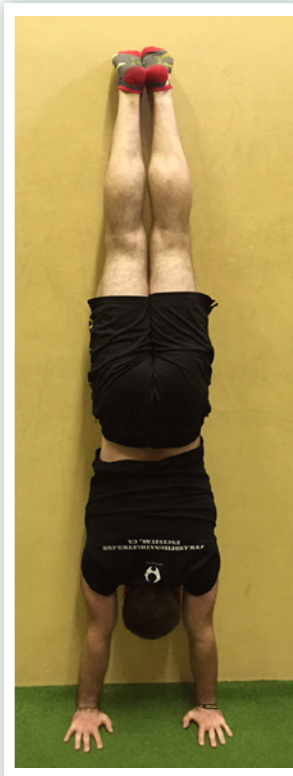


**VERTICAL LOADING:**

**PULLUP BAR HANG**



**HANDSTAND**



## 1-ARM PULLUP BAR HANG



Alternate between the pull and push variation at your current level. Shifting side-to-side in the two arm movements is acceptable in both the pulls and pushes to start getting accustomed to more load on one arm in order to progress to the next level.

Over time it is important to include both vertical and horizontal movements equally. Though progressing in duration is useful, focus more on smoothness of scapular movements rather than overall time in each position.

## LEAN BACK SCAPULAR RETRACTIONS:

With the lean back scapular retractions the goal is to set the scapula down and back while lifting the chest up to the ceiling and arching the body backward like a backbend with straight arms. This movement can be used to teach proper positioning in the initial part of the pullup and as a front lever progression. You may use this movement in addition to the normal scapular movements in a 2-arm vertical hang.



## POSTURE SUPERSET:

### SUPPORT POSITION:



### FARMERS WALK:



Alternating between a Support Position (or L-Sit) and a Farmers Walk (or Deadlift) is a fantastic way to overload scapular depression with arms neutral. This superset is a great complement to the above movements.

Being able to make scapular movements in each of the above positions (and others) is the ultimate expression of shoulder mobility and coordinated strength. Congratulations you have strong and healthy shoulders!



# GLENOHUMERAL JOINT

The glenohumeral joint is the most mobile, and vulnerable joint in the entire body. This presents a significant problem when a person looks to address their shoulder stiffness. Typically there is an underlying problem with the other areas (thoracic, neck, scapula, etc) which makes the glenohumeral joint (already mobile) try to compensate by being hypermobile and thereby making it more vulnerable. What you'll find is that the GH gets unlocked better by unlocking the other areas. It is absolutely crucial to take care of the other areas before trying to strengthen or beat the heck out of the GH joint. You may find through the course of mobilizing the other areas that the GH joint regains its range of motion back without any specific movements to address it.

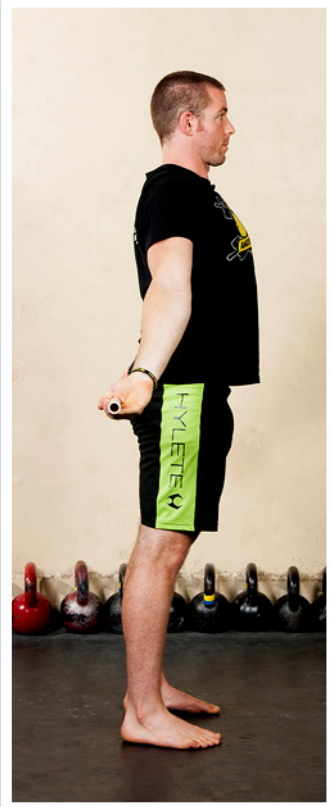
That being said, large, full range of motion joint circles and internal/external rotations are crucial for developing and strengthening the ROM of the GH joint. These can be done loaded and unloaded from a variety of positions. Ultimately the goal is to perform V-sits to Handstand on parallettes and Skin the cats on the rings, as these are actually simply shoulder circles under heavy loads in opposing vectors.

## TABLETOP BRIDGES:



Seated upright on the floor with hands behind you, bridge the hips up into the air until your body forms a rectangular arch (hence tabletop). Using 3 different hand positions (fingers forward, fingers backward, and fingers facing out to sides), perform tabletop bridges for 10-20 repetitions, avoiding excessive fatigue.

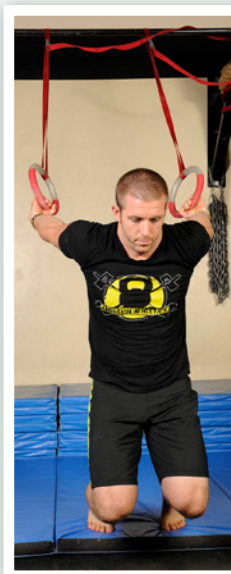
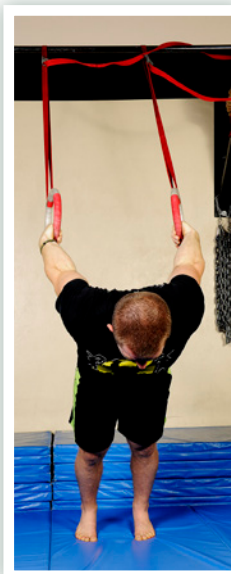
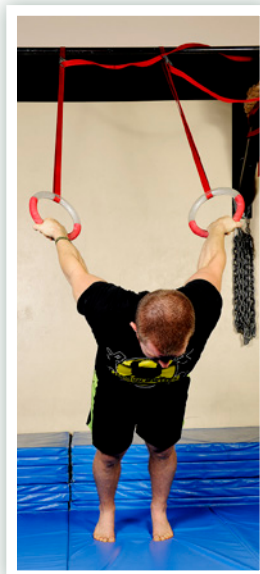
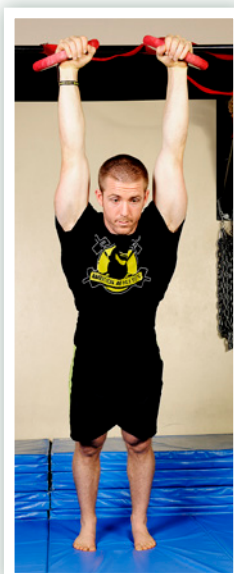
## SHOULDER DISLOCATES:



Hold the dowel with arms wide and palms facing you. Keep the arms straight while reaching the dowel overhead in a circle until it is behind you touching the glutes. Return to start position and repeat. For a greater challenge bring the hands closer together.

## RING STRETCH SERIES:

I find that the degrees of freedom offered by the rings are ideal for assisted mobility.



Start by standing nearly vertical (so the amount of force is relatively small) bring arms overhead and allow the weight to pull the shoulders

back into flexion. Using the leverage, bring the arms out to the side like a big circle, ultimately ending up in shoulder extension (similar to a skin the cat position). Walk the feet back toward the anchor point so the body is angled more downward to increase the challenge of the exercise when ready.

When facing the opposite direction, it is ideal to bend over, rotate and stretch the lateral chain including the Lat and Oblique. When these get overly tight it can wreak havoc on the shoulder. Alternate rotations left and right.

### **ACTIVATION:**

In the previous stretches we are using gravity to facilitate movement. In order to maintain balance, we have to work this position from both directions. So now, the movements are basically the same, but the force vector is opposite. The main focus of the following drills should be to keep the upper traps relaxed, shoulders down, and movements smooth.

### **DOWEL RAISES:**

It is important to teach the muscles to work in their shortened position to own the end range of motion. Dowel raises are ideal for working on end-range shoulder flexion and extension.

## BEHIND BACK (EXTENSION):



For extension, position the dowel behind you with a shoulder width grip and push the dowel upward with straight arms. Hold at the top for a 2 count and perform many repetitions.

## BENT OVER FRONT RAISES:



For shoulder flexion, grab the dowel in a supinated or pronated grip (there are advantages to both) and bend over until the torso is parallel to the floor. From here lift the dowel straight up and forward as high as possible. Hold the top position for a 2 count and repeat for reps.

## SHOULDER CIRCLES:

The shoulder is a ball and socket joint, capable of a huge range of motion and also well suited for circles. Joints love circles and this is especially true for shoulders and hips. Being able to make both giant circles and tiny circles in specific positions will help ensure full motor control—keeping your shoulder strong and healthy. These large circles especially can be considered an evaluation as well as an exercise.



## JOINT CENTRATION:

One of the reasons we lose function (strength and flexibility) in a specific joint lies in the lack of activation in certain muscles. This lack of proper activation causes the sum of the overall muscular contraction to be unable to centrare the joint properly (keep in the center).

Joint centration is the optimal position where there's a proper balance of muscle tension acting on a joint. When it's directly in the



center (optimal position) all the muscles can tug the right (and maximum) amounts.

When your ball isn't properly in the socket, your brain shuts things down (makes you feel pain or takes away strength and/or flexibility) so you won't break yourself.

The key to fixing it requires you to remind all these muscles how to function.

While it often may be difficult to know exactly where the problem is stemming (in some cases a lack of shoulder flexibility stems from a different area rather than the glenohumeral joint itself), you can definitely maximize what you have by utilizing a couple key movements in that specific joint.

The performance of these circles in super slow motion will require that all the muscles fire in the correct amount and in the proper sequence to center the joint.

If along your super slow shoulder circle, you pass through a spot where it either feels tighter, or the circle line has to fall inward, perform small circles tangent to your end ROM.

These rough spots (desired joint positions) just require that you find a way to smooth them out.

These circles can be performed in a variety of positions to target specific muscles more. (IE bent over shoulder circles attack posterior side more than anterior side.)

## This approach applies to all the joints in your body:

- Perform super slow circles
- Identify problem areas and perform extra small circles (at that specific point within large circle)
- Introduce a new range of motion through stretching if necessary
- Repeat large ROM super slow circles

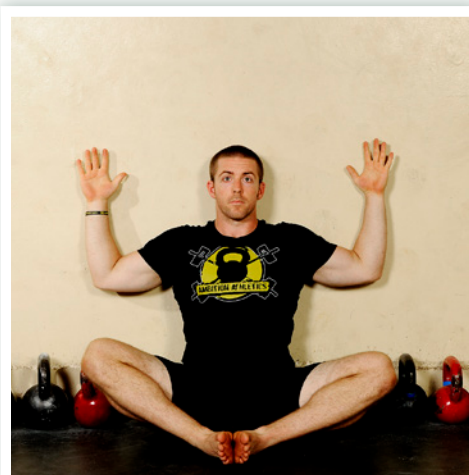
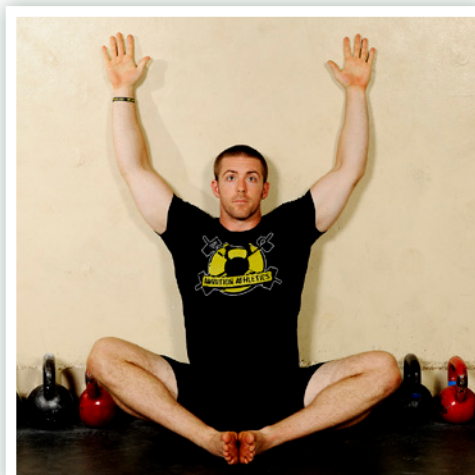
By using these simple strategies, you will make huge improvements to your strength and flexibility—this is going to let you smash big weights in the gym and feel great while doing it.

## WALL SLIDES (EXTERNAL ROTATION):



While keeping back flat against the wall, slide arms up and down the wall as if doing a military press. Keep the wrists, hands, and forearms in contact with the wall at all times with forearms vertical. Use as much ROM as possible.

### SEATED WALL SLIDES:



Perform Wall Slides as above, but seated on the floor with soles of the feet touching. This will increase the postural demand of the movement.

## SIDE LYING WINDMILL:



This is a fantastic exercise for improving thoracic mobility, but it also doubles as a great drill for improving internal rotation.

Set up with a yoga block under the top knee, lying on your side. The bottom leg will be straight. Start by reaching the top arm past the bottom arm and then draw a circle up around and behind you, keeping your eyes following the path of the circle. At the finish, flip the palm so that it faces down instead of up, and bend the elbow as if reaching for your middle/upper back. Reset to start position and repeat.

### TEA CUPS:



This is a very old exercise, but one of the best open chain exercises that targets mobility (especially internal/external rotation) of the glenohumeral joint.

The goal is to keep the palms facing up (as if you had a tea cup in each hand, that you did not want to spill) throughout the movement.

Begin with the hands in front of you with palms up and elbows bent 90 degrees (position 1). Internally rotate as you bring the palms behind you and extend the elbows while going into shoulder extension (position 2). Bring the arms forward while keeping the palms up (internally rotated). Bend the elbow as the arm comes forward until your hands are directly above your head (position 3). From this position, externally rotate and return to position 1. As you get more comfortable, you can smooth out the motion and make it very fluid. Once you have this dialed in, repeat on the other direction. For a challenge, hold a 2.5lb plate in each hand and try to keep it from falling over. Start with something like a yoga block to keep you honest with the palm staying faced up the whole time. If you're a very ambitious individual maybe you can perform it with an actual tea cup!

# NERVE FLOSSING

Releasing the excess neuromuscular tension via nerve flossing prior to activity is not always necessary, but in some cases, it can be the difference between a productive training session, or an injury. The following movements associated with their respective nerves will yield a tell-tale tingling sensation. This lets you know that you are doing the movement properly. Perform about 5 reps at a time--you do not want to piss off your nerves!

### MEDIAN NERVE:



Abduct and externally rotate arm, extend wrist and finger. Keep the shoulders down and tilt head to opposite side. Perform neck rotations or make shoulder circles to facilitate an increase in mobilization.



## RADIAL NERVE:



Abduct and internally rotate arm, flex wrist and fingers. Keep the shoulders down and tilt head to opposite side. Perform neck rotations or make shoulder circles to facilitate an increase in mobilization.

## ULNAR NERVE:



Abduct and externally rotate arm. Flex elbow, extend and pronate wrist, and extend fingers (palm should be facing ceiling). Keep the shoulder down, tilt head to opposite side. Perform neck rotations or make shoulder circles to facilitate an increase in mobilization.

### **COMBO:**

By making figure 8's with the wrist (like conducting an orchestra) in both directions you can stimulate both the median and radial nerves simultaneously and dynamically.

# MANUAL THERAPY

While many problems can be solved through proper movement reeducation alone—the value of soft manual therapy can not be overlooked in treating pain and movement dysfunction. To put it simply, there are some problems where the tissue needs to be treated with pressure (as in massage, physical therapy, etc).

Sometimes this can be addressed through what is called self-myofascial release (SMR): massaging and releasing the tissue yourself. The [Trigger Point Therapy Workbook](#) is a good resource for this subject. When it comes to working out these issues yourself, the use of a lacrosse ball on the wall is a great way to go. One can apply gentle pressure on the muscles in the upper quadrant around the shoulder (Traps, pecs, rhomboids, rotator cuff muscles around the scapula, lats, teres, etc). It is important to not put pressure on the spine itself.

There are many methods of manual therapy that range from joint manipulation through chiropractic, and massage techniques such as ART or Graston. You will have professionals from all of these areas explain the superiority of THEIR specific field, of course. However, we would rather take everything with a grain of salt. In short, applying pressure and/or movement to the area can release muscles that are causing problems. If you feel pain, the first recommendation is to seek out a rehabilitation professional. That being said, you may find great results using a lacrosse ball to release the muscles, and the movements from this book to reeducate the patterns that may have become dysfunctional.

A trigger point is a section of muscle that is in a state of constant contraction (it's switched ON all the time). This makes the overall tonicity of that muscle out of whack and tugs bones out of their ideal position, which can cause pain and dysfunction. Sometimes it can be released with movement, other times you must use some form of release via pressure to get the job done.

### LACROSSE BALL TECHNIQUES:

#### 1. Pin and move

This is a self-directed variation on Active Release Techniques. You find a tender spot (often referred to as a trigger point) and pin the area using applied pressure from the ball. Once this is found you will move the arm so that the muscle that is being pinned moves to a more stretched position. For example, a lat release will have you pin the lat while the arm is down (shortened position), and then move the arm up overhead (stretched position). I personally have found the best success with this method, but everyone is an individual.

#### 2. Push and hold

Find a spot, apply pressure, hold for 30 seconds or until release is felt.

#### 3. Dynamic Massage

Roll back and forth along the muscle from origin to insertion applying enough pressure to feel some discomfort but no pain.

## To Sum Up:

- A joint can have poor movement from a variety of factors including trigger points.
- Sometimes movement alone can release the trigger point and reeducate the proper movement
- Sometimes you need to use some form of manual therapy or self-directed release to help in restoring proper function
- A combination of tissue work and movement is usually going to provide the best results
- As always: if it hurts, don't do it!

# COMBINATIONS & INTEGRATIONS

## COMBO 1: PUSHUP & ROW

Best suited for high repetitions at the end of a session, these pushup and row variations are terrific for locking down posture as well as providing necessary joint conditioning to the wrists, elbows, and shoulders:

### HINDU PUSHUPS:





Starting in a downward dog position, trace a line with your body as if you were sneaking under a barbed wire fence until you reach a cobra stretch (arms straight with hips on the floor). Keep the arms straight and send hips back to start position and repeat.

### REVERSE GRIP PUSHUPS:



For reverse grip pushups, simply externally rotate the arms until the fingers point straight behind you and perform a standard pushup.

### ROW (MULTI GRIP):

Using a barbell or suspension trainer, perform rows with varying grips (palms up, palms down, palms facing each other).

## COMBO 2: PRESS & CHINUP

This second combination will encourage great overhead position, external rotation, and improve your shoulder flexion. Perform back to back for sets of 15+ (use assistance if you can't do that many chinups!):

### REVERSE GRIP OVERHEAD PRESS:



Curl a barbell with palms facing up. From this position, press the bar overhead while keeping shoulders down and neck long.

## CHINUP:

Grab a pullup bar with palms facing you and perform chinups while focusing on keeping the shoulders down away from the ears and the neck long.

## COMBO 3: SKIN THE CAT & L-PULL THROUGH

This combination is the absolute best from an effectiveness standpoint. Which is why the movements are especially highlighted in Ultimate Athleticism. It combines a push and pull through the same range of motion. If you can perform a full L-Sit to handstand you may choose to do so:

## SKIN THE CAT:



Start by hanging from rings. With straight arms, use the lats to bring the body inverted (keep the knees tucked to the chest while getting comfortable with the movement) and slowly lower down behind as the chest comes to face the floor, bringing the shoulders into the same position as a tabletop bridge. Keep the shoulders down away from the ears with lats engaged and pull back to the start position with straight arms. Perform up to 10 repetitions once the movement is second nature.

### L-PULL THROUGH:



From a tucked or straight leg L-Sit, alternate between lifting the hips forward to up and backward. Try to use as little momentum as possible and do not let the arms bend excessively. \*Note that

performing the drill with straight arms under complete control will be the most challenging.

### INTEGRATION 1:

#### CRAWLING:



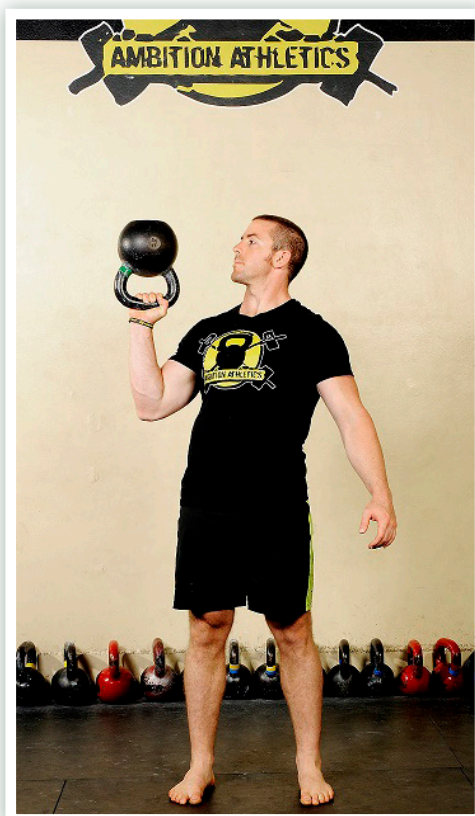
Crawling is a beast all its own and has some unique benefits that encouraged me to include it in this guide. With regard to core activation and its role in assisting proper shoulder function, crawling is king. By alternating the diagonal support of opposite arm/leg the core has to activate to stabilize. And as we mentioned before, when the core is firing properly your shoulders will have a better foundation to move upon.

Crawling forward and backwards is a good idea. Aim for 1-2 minutes of smooth, continuous crawling. To set up, start on hands and knees. While maintaining good posture, lift the knees off the ground until you are supported by only the feet and hands. Moving the opposite hand and leg in unison (leave the ground and contact the ground at the same time) crawl forward or backward while maintaining good posture. If this is too difficult start by leaving the knees down as support.

## INTEGRATION 2:

### BOTTOM UP PRESS:

The bottom up press requires a great deal of strength and coordination throughout all the components of the shoulder. It requires and automatically ensures proper mechanics.



To begin, place your hand on the kettlebell as if you were going to do a pushup. You should be able to put some weight into it. Swing it up to the shoulder and slightly out to the side. This will help engage the lat. From here press the kettlebell overhead while keeping your eyes on the kettlebell even as it goes overhead.

## INTEGRATION 3:

### GET UP:

The key with the get-up is to make smooth transitions and focus on solid positions.

In each position make the following mental checklist:

- Neck is long and free to move
- Shoulders are down into the socket
- Top arm is vertical









The initial movement from the back to the elbow is a rotation, not a sit-up. The rest of the positions are shown above and if you find yourself having problems with any specific area, the best course of action is to repeat that movement alone to dial in the technique—just like a musician might play a small, difficult section of a song.

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

When it comes to implementing these movements into your training program there are a couple ways to do it, depending on your current shoulder health.

### 1. Incorporate many of these movements into a warm up:

Pick one exercise from each category sequentially: Breathing, Core, Thoracic/Neck, Scapular, Glenohumeral and repeat for 1-3 rounds as a superset.

**For example:**

Breathing: Box Breathing x1 min

Core: Side Plank x:30/side

Thoracic/Neck: 90-90 Rotation x5/side with neck rotations

Scapular: Scapular Circles from pushup position x 5 each direction

Glenohumeral: Big Shoulder Circles x 5 each direction

### 2. Intersperse 1-2 movements as part of a strength superset:

**For example:**

#### **Superset 1:**

Handstand

Deadlift

90-90 Rotation

#### **Superset 2:**

Chinup

Airborne Lunge

Side Plank

**3. Integrate Scapular Circles into parts of your normal strength movements:**

For example, start each set of chinups with 5 scapular circles each direction.

**4. Frequent Daily Mini Sessions:**

If you have a lot of room for improvement, a good option is to do small samplings of these movements many times throughout the day.

**5. Incorporate these movements into a 5 Minute Flow:**

5 Minute Flow is a mobility routine with no set parameters other than you must keep moving. More information can be found at [www.maxshank.com](http://www.maxshank.com).

At the end of the day there are two things that will mostly determine your success. Effectiveness and Consistency. This can be achieved by evaluation and re-evaluation combined with daily practice.

**Better Every Day,**

A stylized, handwritten signature in green ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines that form a monogram-like shape.