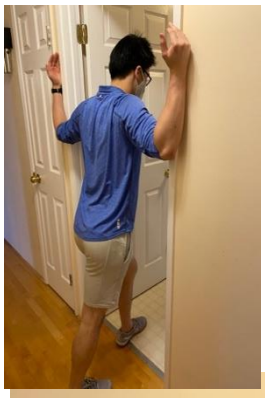
Stretches and Exercises to Fix Rounded Shoulders

Postural problems have been a growing issue in today's population, due to our sedentary lifestyles. One of the most common problems is "rounded shoulders." Rounded shoulders are a condition where the shoulders are in a more forward position than they should anatomically be. This is commonly due to looking downwards at electronic devices for extended periods of time. Although this could be due to a joint issue, where an individual's shoulder joint is protruded forward, it is more likely due to a combination of overused muscles that have become tight and weak muscles that are often neglected. In the following article I will be giving a series of stretches and exercises to fix your issue.

**Please consult your physician before starting any new exercise program*

Stretches: The most common tight muscles are the upper traps and chest. To relieve this issue, try doing a combination of static stretches held for 30-60 seconds and foam rolling/massaging the tight muscles.



- **Doorway Chest Stretch:** Standing in a doorway, raise each arm up with a 90^0 bend in the elbows. Place your palms, forearm, and elbow on the doorway and take on step forward to create a stretch on the chest and shoulders.

- **Neck Stretches:**
  - *Chin tuck (neck flexion):* Bend your neck and bring your head forward, trying to have your chin touch your neck. Tuck your chin to a comfortable position, where a stretch can be felt in the back of your neck.

  - *Neck extension:* While looking up bring your head backward to a comfortable position, where a stretch can be felt in the front of your neck

- *Side neck stretch:* Using your left hand gently pull your head to your left side, bringing the ear closer to the shoulder. Move your head to a comfortable position where a stretch on the opposite side of your neck can be felt.

Exercises: The most common weak muscles are the rotator cuff, rear deltoids, rhomboids, and lower trapezius. Supplementing the following exercises 2-3x a week will strengthen these often-neglected muscle groups and will lead you to fixing your rounded shoulders once and for all.

- **Face Pulls:**
  - Instructions: Using a cable machine, use the rope attachment and attach the cable at an elevated position. Grab the rope with a neutral grip using both your hands and pull the rope towards your nose. When pulling keep your upper arms parallel to the floor and have the handles go to the sides of your face. During the exercise ensure you are externally rotating, this is achieved by making sure your hands are in line with your elbows or behind your elbows in the final position. Hold the end position for a second before returning to the start position.

Starting Position

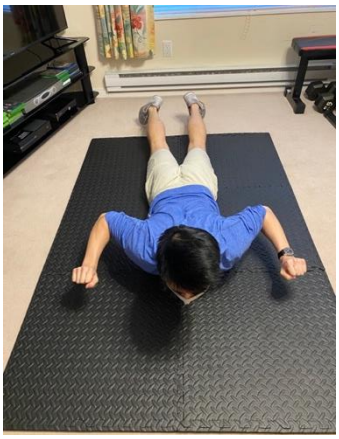
Ending Position

- **Banded Pull Apart:**
  - **Instructions:** Using a resistance band, hold the band with both your hands with your arms in front of you at chest level and shoulder width apart. In this position make sure there is no slack in the band. Pull the band apart with your hands while maintaining chest level. Hold maximal contraction for a second before slowly returning to the beginning position.

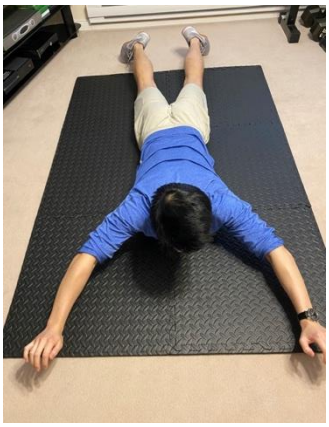
Starting Position

Ending Position

- **Prone Shoulder Press:**
  - **Instructions:** Lay face down, with your head and arms elevated 90^0 to the side and elbows bent at 90^0. Have your hands reach overhead by extending your elbows as far as possible. Slowly return your arms back to the starting position. (This exercise can be done with or without dumbbells)



Starting Position



Ending Position

If you are interested in learning any other exercises to improve your posture and reach your fitness goals, please email *personaltraining@curtishealth.com* or speak to one of our Fitness Coordinators when you are next in and they will be happy to assist you.