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“Too long have I hunted mammoth alone!”

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Volume 19, Number 3

The Newsletter of the World Atlatl Association, Inc  
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July 2006

## How do you prevent that shoulder injury?

Traditional shoulder exercises, such as overhead presses and lateral raises only target the anterior and lateral deltoid muscles. These traditional shoulder exercises don't target the rotator cuff muscles, which are critical to the throwing motion.

The rotator cuff is made up of four separate muscles that wrap around the shoulder joint for internal, external and lateral rotation and stabilization. To perform these exercises you will need an exercise tube or resistance band (both of which can be found at your local sporting good store in a variety of strengths) and an immovable fixture to secure it to.

Let's start with the infraspinatus, a muscle on the back of the shoulder blade that wraps around the shoulder and holds the upper arm in the joint. To exercise this muscle, first secure the tubing at shoulder level. Stand with your right side facing away from the secured strap. Hold the handle in your right hand and directly in front at about chest level. With your elbow slightly bent, pull tubing away from secured end until arm is straight out to left side. After performing the prescribed sets and reps, turn around and repeat for the left shoulder.

The teres minor is a small muscle that runs diagonally across the back of the shoulder that rolls the arm backwards or into external rotation. To properly work this very important muscle, secure the tubing at floor level. Stand with your right side closest to the tubing and grip the handle in your left hand. With your left hand at hip level, palm facing your body and elbow slightly bent. Bring your arm up and out until it is over your left shoulder. Hold and return to starting position. Perform the prescribed sets and reps turn around and repeat.

The supraspinatus is a small muscle on top of the shoulder blade which controls arm movement out and up to the side. To perform external shoulder rotation, secure the tubing at shoulder level. Turn to face where the tubing is secured and hold the handle in one hand with our palm facing the floor. With the elbow bent at 90 degrees at shoulder level and your upper arm parallel to the floor, rotate your shoulder bringing your hand toward the ceiling. hold and return to start position. Don't forget, it is very important to keep your upper arm parallel to floor.

The subscapularis is another muscle responsible for holding the arm into the joint. It is also responsible for internal shoulder rotation. To exercise this muscle, anchor the tubing above your head and face away from the anchor. Hold the tubing handle in one hand with your upper arm at shoulder level. Bend your elbow to 90 degrees. Without moving your elbow, slowly rotate your shoulder until your forearm is parallel to the floor. Hold and return to start position to keep your upper arm parallel to floor throughout the entire movement. As with internal rotation, work both shoulders.

Start all exercises with one set performing eight to 12 repetitions. Slow controlled movements will give you your best results. Don't rush. When you're ready, add a second set.

Combine these four movements with your regular strength and conditioning program and you'll be on your way to having stronger, more stable shoulder joints - which may help you leave that midseason soreness or injury behind.

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Rotator cuff muscles

