

# Introduction

The shoulder is the most mobile joint in the human body. The cost of such versatility results in an increased risk of injury, whether developing acutely (e.g. a sudden fall) or chronically (e.g. repetitive strain). The care and management of the shoulder must be addressed in a logical and well thought out manner.

These injuries can and do affect people of all ages from those in elementary school to college to those who are middle aged as well as seniors; athlete or non-athlete are all vulnerable. Regardless of gender, working individuals who spend their days at the computer, driving trucks or even taking care of children are all subject to the injury prone shoulder. The weekend athlete, tennis or soccer player and even the dart thrower can be just waiting for the tiny “catch” and sharp pain that stops all activity and disrupts their life. Even those in their golden years do not seem to be immune from the all-vulnerable shoulder. Conservative treatment for shoulder injuries can include medication, physical therapy and finally, surgery.

As you now realize, the shoulder injury is here to stay. The questions then become: Why is the shoulder so injury prone? What can I do to prevent injuring my shoulder? What can I do if I have already injured my shoulder?

As a practicing Doctor of Chiropractic for almost 30 years, I have had the opportunity to treat thousands of individuals with either acute and/or chronic shoulder problems. I have seen injuries from activities as simple as a fall in the garden, throwing a baseball a little too hard, to sleeping with the arm in the wrong position to something more serious, such as a head-on auto accident. Most, if not all

of these problems could have been prevented and assisted in their recovery if only a few simple steps had been taken. The understanding of the shoulder is something even those of us with years of experience in diagnosing and managing/treating find difficult to treat. I have consulted numerous sources and spent significant time explaining the shoulder and its treatment protocol in detail to my patients. Often I have found patients not compliant or perhaps did not understand the need to participate in their own rehabilitation.

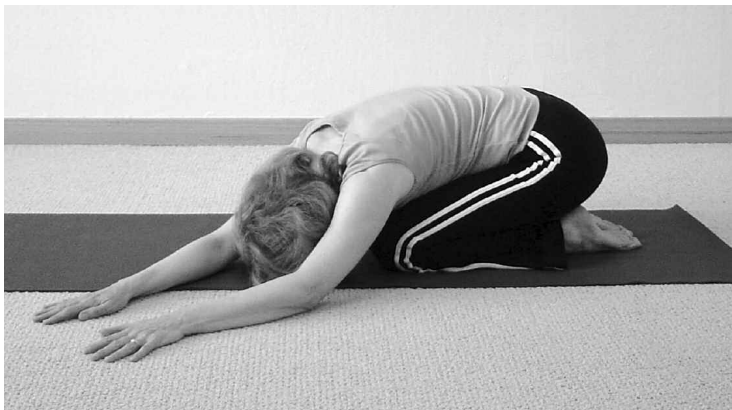
Howard presents a much needed and well thought out text to this most versatile and complex joint. He provides the student with a simple but comprehensive understanding of the anatomy of this joint and how it works. By providing us with a series of excellent exercises and stretching activities he has provided us with a logical approach to help us in preventing shoulder injuries as well as relief for those who are experiencing tight shoulders or limited range of motion. I have and will continue to refer to this useful tool in my ongoing treatment of my patients.

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# ***Child—extended to the side***

## **Easy**

As you exhale bring your hips towards your calves and chest towards your thighs. Extend your arms out in front of you. If your head does not comfortably touch the floor, place a blanket under your head. Keeping your head between your arms walk your arms to the right. You should feel a good stretch through the left side of your torso—breathe into this stretch. For more intensity press the left shoulder down slightly. Take five to eight breaths, release, and do the other side.



# ***One-half dog***

## **Easy**

Come onto all fours with your arm under your shoulders knees right under your hips. Keeping your hips over your knees, slowly walk your hands forward until your arms are fully extended.

If you forehead does not comfortably touch the floor, lift your head so that you ears are inline with your arms. You may also put a blanket under your head. Do not put a lot of force on your shoulders. Take five to ten breaths.



# Wall hang

## Easy

Stand a few inches away from a wall (facing the wall). Put your finger tips on the wall even with your mid chest area. Keeping your finger on the wall walk your feet back until your torso is more or less parallel to the ground. Your legs should be right under your hips (front to back) and hip width apart. Lengthen through your arms and stretch into your hips. Ideally you will want to end up with your arms and sides of your shoulders in one line. Take five to ten slow breaths. If you have tight shoulders you most likely will need to take your hands a few inches higher up the wall to be in the proper position. It may be hard to determine this at first on your own so consider having someone else look at your posture in this exercise.

*Note: If it hurts your hands to use your fingertips come onto your palms instead. Be sure not to sink into your shoulders; instead lengthen through them.*



# ***Hands up the wall***

## **Easy**

Stand about six inches away from a wall. Extend your arms overhead and place your palms on the wall. Lower your forehead to the wall. Do not force your forehead to the wall. It is OK if it doesn't touch. Keeping your hands and forehead on the wall start to move your feet back until you feel a good stretch in your shoulders, arms or chest.

If you feel discomfort in your neck or shoulders lift your forehead off the wall. Make sure you are not overarching your lower back. For less stretch walk your feet in towards the wall for more stretch walk your feet back. Take five to ten deep breaths and release.



# ***Sandbags on shoulders***

## **Easy**

Many people find this exercise feels terrific as well as therapeutic especially if there is a tendency to round the shoulders forward and collapse the chest. **On rare occasion using sandbags creates some discomfort—if this happens to you, don't do the exercise.**

Lie on the floor as shown with a folded blanket under your head. Make sure your legs, hips, torso, neck and head are all in one line. Allow your feet to drop to the sides. Place a ten pound sandbag across each shoulder so that part of the sandbag is resting on the shoulder and part of it is resting on the floor as shown in the photo. Take your arms to 45° with your palms facing up. Close your eyes and rest here for five to ten minutes. To come out move the sandbags and slowly roll to your right side into a fetal position. Use both arms to slowly press up to a seated position.

