

# HEALTHY MOVES

## Stretch of the Month Shoulder Rotator Cuff

### Why stretch the Rotator Cuff muscles

The Rotator Cuff of the shoulder is a group of four muscles that stabilize and rotate the ball and socket joint of the shoulder. The tendons of the rotator cuff are often injured in throwing and swimming motions, or falling on outstretched arms.

With repetitive strain of overhead movements, or trauma, some tendons get pinched between the tip of the shoulder blade and the head of the upper arm. This creates a friction that can irritate, or even rupture, one of the tendons.

Flexibility in the shoulder, and proper muscle function, allow proper movement of the ball within the socket. This helps prevent impingement (the above mentioned pinching). Flexibility includes adequate muscle and tendon elasticity, which helps endure the strain of activity.

### How to stretch

- Sit on a chair with your back to a table or desk
- Place your right hand behind you, resting on the desk, with palms facing up.
- If this places too much stretch on the shoulder, raise your seat.
- Sit up straight and gently lean back letting your hands slide backward.
- If no stretch is felt in the shoulder, lower your seat or raise the table ( by placing a pillow or other padding on the table) .
- Hold stretch for 30 seconds.
- Repeat for other side.



### Alternate Stretch

The towel stretch is another popular rotator cuff stretch:

- Grab a towel or belt.
- Sit or stand with good posture.
- Holding it in your left hand drape the towel or belt over the left shoulder.
- Reach behind your back to grasp the towel with your right hand.
- Pull up on the towel with your left hand, raising the right hand until you feel a stretch in the right shoulder.
- At the point of comfortable stretch anchor the towel by resting it on your left shoulder, all the while keeping the tension with your left hand.
- Hold for 30 seconds.
- Repeat for other side



*For both these stretches the feeling of comfortable stretch should be felt in the top and front of the shoulder joint.*

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### Disclaimer:

Suggestions made in this publication are no substitute for medical advice. If you have any pain or difficulty performing the described stretches, seek advice from your appropriate health professional.