Essential Shoulder Training
-Surfers Shoulders-

www.surftrainingsuccess.com
www.surfstrengthcoach.com

by: Cris Mills LMT, CSCS
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Shoulder Anatomy
3. Steps to Building Surf Shoulders
4. Breathing
5. Thoracic Spine Movement
6. Soft Tissue Quality
7. Muscular Activations
8. Strengthening Exercises

DISCLAIMER
Surf Training Success was created for the purpose of education and information; the reader should be cautioned that there is an inherent risk assumed by the participant with any form of physical activity. Any individual beginning the exercises contained in this video, or beginning any other exercise program, should first consult with a qualified health professional. Anyone participating in these activities should understand that such training initiatives may be dangerous if performed incorrectly, and may not be appropriate for everyone. Discontinue any exercise that causes discomfort and/or dysfunction and consult with a qualified medical professional. The instructions and advice presented are in no way a substitute for professional testing, instruction, or training. The creator of this program disclaim any liabilities or loss, personal or otherwise, in connection with the exercises and advice herein.
Chapter 1
Introduction

You're a surfer. being in the water is part of your life. It energizes you and brings you a hell of a lot of happiness and fun. Don't let painful joints take that away from you. Don't allow beat up shoulders to limit what you can do in the water, and diminish the enjoyment you get from surfing.

I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with a lot of people presenting some severely dysfunctional shoulders.... “shoulder funk”. I myself have been through several issues with my shoulders, including two reconstructions and reoccurring impingement issues that I'm still working on. Over the course of seeing many clients, learning from a lot of smart people, and dealing with my own shoulders, I've been able to piece together the foundations of what you can work on to improve shoulder health, function, mobility, and everything else you need to keep those arms paddling in the water.

As a surfer, strength training coach, and massage therapist, I realize the importance of an optimally functioning shoulder joint, to not only having a great time in the water, but especially when aiming to improve abilities and performance.

If your shoulder is giving you problems, it is limiting your paddling, effecting your duck dives, possibly effecting your rotational power, and likely creating muscle imbalances which can lead to all sorts of problems down the road.

Essentially, a dysfunctional shoulder complex is robbing you of your surf time, and that is what this program will help you address. Build some Surfers Shoulders, get in the water, paddle for hours, and have some fun..... pain free.
Chapter 2

Basic Shoulder Anatomy

This is a brief description of the shoulder complex. This is far from an in depth look into the structure of the shoulder girdle and its variety of biomechanics. What follows are the general understandings of what comprises the shoulder joint, and how it functions. This basic understanding of the shoulder girdle, its movements, stability requirements, and its structure will help you understand the need for the following exercises and movements within the Surfers Shoulders program.

Quick anatomy: the shoulder is comprised of the head of the humerus (upper arm bone), the scapula (shoulder blade), and the clavicle (collarbone). These structures form the glenohumeral joint (humeral head and fossa of scapula), the acromioclavicular joint (clavice and acromion process of scapula), and the sternoclavicular joint (clavicle and sternum). These joints are held together via cartilage, ligaments and connective soft tissue structures.

The glenohumeral joint (GH) is what is often referred to as the shoulder joint. The rotator cuff provides muscular stabilization of the humeral head within the fossa of the scapula. It basically holds your upper arm bone in the socket, as long as the rotator cuff is functioning properly. The rotator cuff is comprised of the muscles and tendons of the supraspinatus muscle, infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis.
ALMOST DONE WITH ANATOMY...

You've got the basic shoulder joint anatomy. What you now need to understand is that optimal shoulder health is more than just a well functioning GH joint and rotator cuff. The strength and coordination of the muscles that attach your scapula to your body can dictate how well your shoulder joint functions and stabilizes.... leading to a high performing Surf Shoulder.

Certain muscles hold your scapula onto your ribcage and create movement as well as stability. If these muscles are dysfunctional, weak, or comprised of unhealthy tissue, it can adversely effect the entire shoulder. So for a beneficial shoulder program, the GH joint and its associated muscles must be addressed, as well as the shoulders the act upon the scapula. It is the muscles that attach the scapula to the ribcage that give the shoulder joint a firm and STABLE foundation. The endurance and strength of stabilizing the scapula that allows for the huge range of motion of the GH joint that we as surfers require for strong powerful paddle strokes.

LAST BIT OF ANATOMY!

Your thoracic spine and its associated ribs comprise the last bit of what you need to know about your shoulders. Understand that the body functions as a whole, and a joint can effect another joint somewhere else in the body. If one part is not moving properly, it can negatively effect the movement of another part of the body. This is how your shoulder interacts with the thoracic spine.

If you lack proper mobility in this portion of your spine, or display improper postures in this portion of spine, it will adversely effect the movement of your scapula, which directly effects the movement of the GH joint, possibly compressing soft tissue, degrading tendons, and tearing rotator cuff structures. This can be bad, painful, and can lead to some serious problems keeping you out of the water.

With that, anatomy is finished! Simply understand that certain muscles compose your rotator cuff, other muscles hold your scapula to your rib cage and help it to shift and move, and on top of that your thoracic spine needs to move well so everything else can move well. Shoulders are far more in depth than this, but this is the basis of what you need to know to build some Surfers Shoulders.
Chapter 3

Steps to Building Surfers Shoulders

This portion is fast, and easy. You've figured out some basic anatomy of the shoulder girdle. Basically, a well functioning shoulder requires certain muscles activate to provide stability, other muscles to create movement, and specific joints need mobility. When those things happen correctly, then you're in the water for hours with no shoulder pain and lots of paddling power.

If this is not the case with your shoulders and you've got some shoulder funk going on, then you need to start implementing the steps outlined below to start building Surfers Shoulders.

- **Proper Breathing**
  Improper breathing patterns can effect muscle tensions throughout the neck and chest. Some of these muscles can influence your shoulder girdle. Improper breathing patterns can stress certain muscles that could negatively effect your shoulder and create pain and dysfunction.

- **Thoracic Spine Movement**
  The thoracic spine can have a great influence over the shoulder girdle. Optimal movement in your thoracic spine, and proper posture through your thoracic spine will benefit your entire shoulder girdle and help to make your shoulders more injury resistant, and more mobile.

- **Soft tissue Quality**
  Your body is comprised of layers of tissue. Some of these layers are comprised of muscles and fascia. Fascia is a connective tissue that basically envelops your muscles. These tissues can change the movements of your shoulder, and potentially offset your shoulder girdle posture when some tissues are too loose and others too tight. In order to restore proper range of motion, movement, and posture, some tissues need to be released or stretched while others need to be strengthened. This tissue may be full of adhesions, trigger points, and tenderness. This would be deemed low quality tissue. Through stretching and self massage techniques, healthy tissue can be restored, improving your posture increasing shoulder range of motion, and providing a platform for strong stable shoulders.

- **Muscular Activations**
  Certain muscles that comprise portions of your shoulder girdle become less active due to injury or postural offsets. There are several muscles you will “activate” or excite through certain movements. These muscles when more “active” help place the scapula into a better position to allow for strengthening of the shoulder girdle and decreasing likelihood of injury.

- **Strengthening Exercises**
  Once the previous points have been taken care of, then you can move on to actual strengthening protocols. Depending on particular shoulder issues, or intention of training, exercises can be tailored to work on endurance, strength, stability, or power.
Chapter 4

Breathing

How well do you breathe? Have you ever even considered to notice how well you can breathe, or your particular method of breathing? If you've got some shoulder funk going on, then you should definitely take a look at your breathing.

The manner in which you breathe can have a large impact on the muscles surrounding your chest, neck, and abdomen. These muscles, which can be negatively impacted by improper breathing, can play a large role in problematic shoulders and dysfunctions.

The method to improve your breathing pattern is simple, and can be worked on all the time. I often recommend to clients to spend a few minutes in the evening before bed working on this, and also at the end of their workout routines.

Lay on your back and place a hand on your chest and a hand on your abdomen. Inhale, and take notice of which hand moves first. Does all the movement take place in only your chest? Does your stomach move at all?

Ideally, upon inhale your stomach is the first to raise up, followed lastly by the chest. This pattern is what is referred to as diaphragmatic breathing or Belly Breathing. That's a fancy term for proper movement and muscle function for inhalation and exhalation. Often, people inhale and only get movement from the chest. This is referred to as “chest breathing,” and it is that type of breathing that stresses out muscles throughout the chest and shoulder girdle, creating dysfunction and muscular overuse. So now you've tested your breathing, how do you fix it?

- The test is basically also the exercise, HOWEVER, you focus on proper diaphragmatic breaths. Upon inhale, the stomach inflates followed lastly by the chest. This may seem awkward at first, but spend some time working on this, and your body will quickly re-adapt this breathing pattern. Belly Breaths!
**For some, the supine position (laying on your back), is difficult to get the “feel” of proper breathing. If that is the case, try the exercise laying on your stomach.

When laying on your stomach, allow your head to rest upon your forearms. Inhale and focus on your belly pressing into the floor, followed lastly by a bit of movement in your chest. The pressure from the floor often helps people get the sensation of stomach inflation, which is difficult to feel when laying on your back.

Learning a better breathing pattern is easy, it just takes some practice. I highly recommend you give this exercise some effort, especially if you’ve got some funk going on with your shoulders. This pattern of breath will allow certain muscles to relax and release tension that could be aggravating shoulder problems. Not to mention, improved breathing mechanics will help you out in the surf on a big paddle day, helping to maintain a calmer rate of breath and helping to keep your working muscles full of necessary oxygen.

• Improve your breathing pattern..... Belly Breaths!!
• Work on this pre and post workout, or while sitting in your car or desk.
• Many of my clients find this a beneficial way to relax prior to going to bed at night.
• Inhale – stomach inflates followed by a small movement in the chest.
Chapter 5

Thoracic Spine Mobility

This is an important one! However, a bit more anatomy...brief and easy though. Your spine is comprised of the cervical portion (top), thoracic portion (middle), and lumbar portion (lower). Take note of the image below, and you're looking at the thoracic spine, affiliated ribs, and the scapula.

Take notice of how the scapula sit on the rib cage, and the rib cage stems from the thoracic spine. As I pointed out earlier in this text, joints in the body can effect other joints. If you lose motion and proper alignment in this portion of your spine, it largely impacts the movement of the scapula. Recall the scapula comprises part of your shoulder joint. If your scapula are not moving properly due to a faulty moving thoracic spine, then you can count on some sort of shoulder problem sooner or later.

- You Need Thoracic Spine Mobility
- You Need Proper Spinal Alignment
- You Need Proper Posture

Work on Attaining Those Three Things, and You are Making Drastic Steps Towards Stronger, Injury Resistant Shoulders

Notice the large variation in spinal postures in the picture. The figure on the left represents good spinal alignment, while the figure on the left is the typical slouched, head forward, rounded shoulders, I spend too much time at the computer American. That posture will WRECK shoulders! When the thoracic spine compresses like that, and rounds forward, it loses mobility, and negatively effects the positioning and movement of the shoulders. You MUST restore mobility and alignment to that portion of the spine to allow proper range of motion at the scapula, and proper muscle function of the shoulder girdle.
HOW TO RESTORE THORACIC MOBILITY

There are several methods to increasing movement of the thoracic spine. I will quickly touch on several. These should be incorporated into all of your workout warmups, surf warmups, and off days. These are all great stretches and movements that your posture and shoulders will drastically benefit from.

*If you have any spinal pathologies or pre-existing conditions, you must obtain clearance from a qualified professional prior to implementing these movements.

1) **Feldenkrais Shoulder / Spine Integration**

Begin in a side-lying position as shown, hand on top of hand. This is a slow movement coordinated with your breathing. Slowly draw your top hand across your arm and chest while inhaling. As hand slides along chest and comes to the other shoulder, begin exhaling, and continue to rotate head and torso. Do not force motion. Stop movement at first sign of tension or muscular tightness. Each successive movement will go a little further into rotation. 16-20 repetitions (reps) per side.
2) Tennis Ball Thoracic Extension Mobilization

To properly perform this movement, you will need either a towel rolled up to roughly the width of a fist, or a more beneficial tool would be two tennis balls taped together. Duct tape works very well for this. You will essentially lay on your back with knees bent and feet on floor. Place the tennis balls or towel roll underneath the lower segment of your thoracic spine, just below mid-back. A crunching motion occurs for several repetitions with emphasis on the extension portion of the movement (when chest and head fall to floor). This extension movement coincides with an exhalation of breath. Hold the extended position for 1-2 seconds. You then lift the chest and shoulder off the floor a few inches, and repeat the extension/exhalation movement. Repeat several times for each segment of the thoracic spine. Please refer to the Surfers Shoulder video for specific exercise instruction.

Showing placement of spine between two duct-taped tennis balls. A rolled up towel will also suffice. The towel's width can be adjusted depending on tolerance of movement. There can be some discomfort with this motion. If any serious pain or dysfunction presents, immediately stop movement.

An estimate of placement for lowest portion of thoracic spine. Pay attention to NOT use this mobilization in your lumbar spine, OR cervical spine.

The upper “crunch” portion of the mobilization. During the crunching phase of the motion, breath is inhaled.
This is the final portion of the movement, the extension phase. Breath is exhaled during this motion and the bottom position is held for 1-2 seconds before crunching back up. Perform 2-4 movements per vertebral segment of the thoracic spine. To work on the next vertebral segment you would place the tennis balls about 1 inch higher on the spine than the previous position.

3) **Quadruped Thoracic Extension & Rotation Movement**

This movement is great for incorporating extension of the thoracic spine, which you just increased with the Tennis Ball mobilization drill, and incorporating rotation as well. Rotation is not only vital to us as surfers, but this motion helps to glide the scapula over the rib cage, in essence mobilizing the scapula and creating a proper integration of movement. Bottom line... it's a GOOD thing for your shoulders.

You will begin on hands and knees. Pay attention to proper lumber spine position, and maintaining that position throughout the movement. It is essential that you maintain a “stiff” core and lumbar spine. This will force the motion to take place in the thoracic spine, rather than compensating through other parts of the body which could lead to injury. One hand is placed behind the head, that arm, along with head and eyes, are rotated up towards the ceiling with inhalation. Do not speed through this movement. Control the motion and hold the top position for 1-2 seconds. Repeat 8-12 reps per side, and perform a few extra reps if one side is more limited than the other. I often find with clients that one side is far more mobile than the other. For injury resistance you want to work to reduce those asymmetries between sides.

This is the proper positioning of the spine for this movement. Notice the alignment of the lumbar spine and thoracic spine. This lumbar spine position will remain throughout the movement. If not, you will not fully benefit from this mobility drill.
Hand placed on back of head, while lumbar posture is maintained.

This is the uppermost portion of the movement. Notice elbow, eyes, head, and torso drive towards the ceiling. This takes place with inhalation. Highest position is held for 1-2 seconds and movement is repeated for 8-12 reps per side.

Those are three great motions for helping to restore thoracic spine posture, as well as thoracic spine mobility. I can't stress enough how much positive influence these mobility drills / mobilizations can have on shoulders. Work on these often, especially before any type of workouts, or even on your off days do get in some beneficial movement work. The Feldenkrais movement is a great way to work on breathing and rotation at the same time. I often have clients work on this movement prior to bed, or upon waking, as it is a calming and relaxing movement which has the body move in a beneficial way.
Chapter 6

Soft Tissue Quality

Your body is composed of layers of tissue: skeletal tissue, nervous system tissues, muscle tissues, and connective tissues. What Soft Tissue Quality refers to is the overall health of your muscular tissue and fascial connective tissue. Fascia is a collagen matrix of tissue surrounding your muscle tissue.

The “health” of your tissue is in reference to proper length and ability to elongate, as well as the composition of tissue and lack of scar tissue and adhesion. There are steps you can take to restore optimal tissue health which is another step in the process of getting your shoulders surf ready.

Lack of tissue quality will negatively effect your shoulder girdle posture as well as your shoulder range of motion. Once that occurs, deterioration of the shoulder joint will begin to occur, which could definitely keep you out of the surf.

Take a glance at these pictures. Both illustrate an optimal posture and shoulder girdle position, as well as some seriously bad spinal and shoulder postures. Postures like that will tear up a shoulder by offsetting the position of the joint. An analogy for the shoulder is that of your car's tire alignment. If they are out of alignment, things slowly begin to break down with an eventual expensive repair bill and some severe damage. The same thing will occur with the shoulder. Once that joint is out of line due to offset spinal alignment, and low quality tissue health, things start to break down due to friction.

Essentially, you must restore proper tissue health to the tissue pulling your shoulder girdle out of alignment.

This will be accomplished with some specific stretching, as well as some self administered soft tissue work. If you've got access to a good manual therapist or massage therapist, that could really speed up the process of restoring tissue health. This type of tissue work can be applied to just about anywhere on the body, and this is a step that can really help you stay injury free, and highly flexible...... both really good things for us surfers.

SURF TRAINING SUCCESS

14
Latissimus Dorsi Tissue Release and Stretch

Foam rolling the latissimus dorsi muscle. This muscle has the ability to internally rotate the shoulder placing it into a position of pronation. Roll the entire tissue SLOWLY from the side all the way into the armpit. Find the spots of tenderness and really work that area. Spend about 2 minutes per side.

Please review Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instructions.

Latissimus Dorsi Stretch
This stretch should be felt within the armpit area and quite possibly all the way down the side. Hold the stretch for 20-30seconds per side.
Pectoralis Major/Minor (Chest) Tissue Release and Stretch

This tissue work requires the use of a tennis ball or lacrosse ball. I personally recommend you get your hands on a lacrosse ball which is more dense. When just getting started this tissue work may be a bit too intense for those of you with severe tissue problems. If that is the case a tennis ball is a bit more forgiving. In the end, the lacrosse ball is the way to go, and they are cheap... around $2.

Please view the Surfers Shoulders video for details of this particular Chest Tissue release.

Lacrosse/Tennis ball is placed against the wall and the chest is pressed against it to a tolerable pressure. Remember, you are trying to change tissue composition, so you need to use a pressure that is about a 7/8 on a 1-10 scale, 10 being intolerable pain. Being at a corner of the wall makes this movement a bit easier to accomplish. Roll around that tissue for about 2 minutes per side, focusing on areas of tenderness.

Incorporate some arm movement with this chest tissue work. This is essentially pin and stretching the chest tissue.
Wall Chest Stretch

This stretch will be held for 20-30 seconds, and at times up to 1 minute if you have a lot of tissue tension in this area. Notice the thumb position. You would continue to pull the chest further away from the hand to increase the stretch.

Refer to the Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instruction.

Rhomboid / Trapezius / Levator Scapulae Tissue Release and Stretch

This lacrosse /tennis ball work can help to release a lot of problematic tissue in this area. Often clients will feel aches and pain in this tissue, usually due to overwork because of chronically tight chest tissue pulling the shoulders forward, forcing this posterior shoulder tissue to “fight” and keep the shoulders in place. Spend some time working around this tissue, but attention MUST also be paid to the previously shown chest tissue release work.

Again, the trusted lacrosse ball. Get yourself one!

Please refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instructions.

Essentially, I'm pressing my back against the ball, which is against the wall. Roll around and find problematic tissue. Spend 2-3 minutes per side of the back.
**Levator Scapulae / Trapezius Stretch**
You may feel this stretch in a variety of places, and may differ from one side to the other. Spend 20-30 seconds per side. If one side is far more tight than the other, add an extra stretch to that side.

Those three areas of tissue work and stretches will begin to address the larger muscles that could be negatively impacting your shoulder posture, performance, and range of motion. Stretches should be performed prior to your workouts, but after your tissue work – foam rolling, lacrosse/tennis ball work. Tissue work and stretches can and should be utilized on your off days to really make some faster changes. This tissue quality work will really boost your overall range of motion and help to alleviate any aches and pains you may currently have.
Chapter 7

Muscular Activations

You've got to get a couple muscles woken up and working! Due to injury, offset posture, or general weakness, there are several muscles within the shoulder girdle that need to get “excited” and start performing their job again. Their job is basically to help stabilize the scapula, or produce certain movements of the scapula to allow your shoulder joint to perform at its best. You excite these muscles through activation movements. These movements can actually be incorporated as exercises, and often I have clients do just that for the first few weeks of shoulder work. Once some strength is developed in these muscles, a few reps prior to your workout or in between exercise sets is sufficient.

These are the two primary muscles you will be activating. The left picture is of the Serratus Anterior, while the right picture is the lower fibers of the Trapezius muscles, often referred to as the Lower Trap.

The Serratus Anterior is largely responsible for anchoring the scapula to the ribcage, helping to provide a stable foundation for the shoulder joint to optimally function. It also helps to produce upward rotation of the scapula, a movement necessary for full range of motion paddling. The Lower Trapezius, while also helping to provide stability to the scapula, it primarily produces upward rotation of the scapula. Again, upward rotation of the scapula is critical for maintaining a well functioning shoulder joint, and vitally important for anyone looking to paddle pain free and powerfully.
**Serratus Anterior Activations/Pushes**

**Kneeling Variation**

The movement occurs at the shoulder blade.
Perform 8-12 reps for activation. When utilizing as an exercise, perform 2-3 sets of 8-12 reps.

Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instructions.

**Pushup Position**

Hands are placed together. You must maintain proper pushup position while performing this movement. Do not allow hips or head to drop. Movement only takes place at shoulder blade.
**Lower Trapezius Activations- Wall Slides**

Stand with back against wall, braced torso. Try to get your forearms against the wall. At first you may not be able to, but as you continue with all previously mentioned stretches, tissue work, and mobility drills, you will develop the flexibility to place your forearms against wall.

Slide your arms up the wall into a Y position. Keep your core braced, not allowing your low back to arch, and keep forearms against wall or as close as possible. Hold the top position for 2 seconds, slide arms back down to starting position or just below it, and repeat full movement. 8-12 reps.

Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instruction.
Chapter 8

Strengthening Exercises

The following list is only a sample of shoulder strengthening exercises, but all have a specific strength benefit in regards to proper function of the shoulder girdle and accompanying joints. Not all these exercises are correct for everyone, especially those presenting with chronic issues. You may need to specifically strengthen an individual muscle prior to incorporating all these exercises, or utilize a different exercise all together. If at any time these exercises produce pain, stop the exercise immediately and consult a health care practitioner.

These exercises are specific to help strengthen your shoulder girdle in the manner that we as surfers require. Endurance, stability, and power. The following exercises do not incorporate much power development, but do lay the foundations of stability, strength, and endurance that will help your shoulders stay in surf shape. Power development cannot occur safely or efficiently without a base of stability and strength, which this entire program will deliver.

These exercises alone will help strengthen your shoulders for your water time, however to fully benefit you MUST work on all steps to building Surfers Shoulders. The thoracic spine mobility drills, breathing, tissue work, and stretches provide the foundation for high performance shoulders. When those drills are coupled with these specific strengthening exercises, the true benefit of this program can be obtained. Strength, stability, endurance, injury resistance, and flexibility. Build yourself some Surfers Shoulders.

A last note before the exercises. These exercises are in descending order of difficulty. In other words, they are in the correct order you would perform them. The more difficult and demanding movements are performed prior to the smaller movements working on individual muscles or the rotator cuff. All of your workout programs should be structured in this manner for your benefit and safety.
BENT ROWS
For this movement you can utilize dumbbells or a barbell. When beginning this program utilize a weight that allows you to perform 16-18 SLOW reps for 2-3 sets. After several weeks, begin to utilize a weight that allows you to perform 10-12 reps for 3-5 sets. This will elicit more strength development, while the higher repetition sets will promote development of endurance. Pay strict attention to form and posture. Grip and elbow position is very relevant. Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instructions and variations.

ALTERNATING CABLE PULLS
This movement continues to develop back extensor strength (helps build endurance in back muscles for paddling postures), proper mechanics of the scapula, and incorporates a rotational component. You can also utilize this movement with a simultaneous pull, rather than alternating. Perform 16-18 SLOW reps per arm for 2-3 sets at the beginning of this program. After several weeks, increase the weight used to allow for 10-12 reps for 3-5 sets. Pay strict attention to quality movement, maintaining proper spinal posture, and proper shoulder positioning. Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instruction.
**CABLE FACE PULLS**
This movement promotes strengthening of your scapular adductors, mid-trapezius and rhomboids, humeral external rotators, as well as helping to promote upward rotation of the scapula. Upward rotation of the scapula is vital for high performance paddling. This exercise is best utilized for more endurance development, so stay in the higher rep range with this movement. 12-18 reps for 2-3 sets. Pay attention to hand placement and spinal postures. Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instruction.

**SERRATUS ANTERIOR PUSHES**
This is included as an exercise as well as an activation. Often people need more than just activation of this muscle, they need to strengthen it. As a surfer, this muscle becomes exceptionally important in maintaining optimal shoulder function during repetitive duck dives, pop-ups, and stabilization during high intensity rowing. Bottom line, you will benefit from strengthening your serratus anterior. The following pictures exemplify the kneeling and pushup version. The pushup version may be too advanced for some, so a progression from kneeling would be hands elevated on a box or bench. This variation is shown in the Surfers Shoulders video. Perform 10-14 reps for 2-3 sets. Pay strict attention to form, and that the motion is taking place at the shoulder girdle, not the elbow.
STABILITY BALL A,T,Y's
This movement continues the development of back extensor strength and endurance, but begins to incorporate focus on specific scapular muscles that are critical to a well functioning shoulder. This movement should be performed towards the end of a workout so these muscles are not overly fatigued for larger movement exercises such as Bent Rows or Alternating Cable Pulls. There are three individual positions, A, T, and Y, which can be strengthened individually, and progressed to full movement between each position. This exercise promotes endurance, so positions are held for a period of time totaling 2+ minutes. For example, if working on A position, a rep is held for 10 seconds, for around 12 reps which would be 2 minutes of actual work. You could also hold the same position for the full 2 minutes total. You will perform 2-3 sets of whichever movement you are working on. With clients I may focus on one particular position if there is a weakness, but all positions should be developed and can all be worked on within one set, moving from position to position. An alternating arm version is also shown. Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for more detailed instruction.

A position
T position

Y position

Alternating Arms

SURF TRAINING SUCCESS
26
**Stability Ball Alphabet**

This movement places an emphasis on dynamic stabilization of the shoulder. It is basically training the rotator cuff to rapidly co-contract and react to rapid changes of force. Dynamic stabilization training is a critical piece of functional rotator cuff training. To perform this movement, place hands on top of stability ball, and draw out the alphabet with your hands. This movement trains the shoulder in a manner similar to the forces during a duck dive. The beginners version is with both hands on ball. Progress to one arm on ball. 1Rep is a completion of the alphabet. Perform 2-3reps with a 30second rest between each rep. Pay attention to proper spinal alignment and shoulder stability. Perform this exercise towards the end of the workout, as it would be detrimental to your shoulder health to fatigue the rotator cuff prior to larger exercise movements. Refer to Surfers Shoulders video for detailed instruction.

![Beginners 2 Hand Version](image1)

![Advanced 1 Arm Version](image2)

A very progressed version of this movement would be with toes on the floor. This places much more demand on the core and shoulder girdle, taking the emphasis off of rotator cuff training.
**Jump Rope Dynamic Stabilization**
This movement, similar to the Stability Ball Alphabet, trains the rotator cuff to dynamically stabilize. This movement needs to be utilized towards the end of a workout, and will be performed for time. 2-3 reps of 30 seconds per arm. Work up to 1 minute rounds of work for 2-3 reps. A jump rope is held several inches below its handle. The short end is quickly rotated and stabilized with a straight arm, while slowly moving the arm into varying positions.

![Jump Rope Dynamic Stabilization](image1)

**Side Lying External Rotation**
This movement directly trains the external rotators of the humerus, specifically the infraspinatus and teres minor of the rotator cuff. Perform this at the end of your workout. Pay close attention to proper positioning and form, and bolster the arm. 12-16 reps for 2-3 sets per arm. If one arm is particularly weak, focus a little extra effort on that arm. Most people can benefit from this exercise with a 2-3 lb weight. For those a bit stronger, utilize a 5 lb weight.

![Side Lying External Rotation](image2)
GET TO WORK!

Here’s an example of an introductory shoulder program utilizing all the previous movements. This example will focus on endurance strength so the rep ranges will be higher and utilize lower weights.

A1, A2, A3, denotes a circuit. This means you would perform each exercise immediately after the previous, and only rest after completing all movements included in circuit.

SHOULDER ENDURANCE PROGRAM

Mobility Drills, Soft Tissue Drills, and Activations

A) Barbell Row 3 sets x 16 reps
B1) Alternating Cable Pulls 2 sets x 16 reps
B2) Squat Jumps 2 sets x 10 reps ***this is included as demonstration of how to incorporate other exercises into this program working on relevant movements for surfing.
C1) Cable Face Pulls 2 sets x 14 reps
C2) Serratus Activations/Pushes 2 sets x 10 reps
D1) Stability Ball ATY’s with movement 2 sets x 2 minutes
D2) Forward Ball Roll 2 sets x 10 reps ***this is included as demonstration of how to incorporate other exercises into this program working on relevant movements for surfing.
E) Stability Ball Alphabet 1 Arm 1 set/Arm x alphabet
F) Jumprope Dynamic Stabilization 1 set/Arm x 1 minute
G) Side Lying External Rotations 2 sets/Arm x 12 reps

This program could be tailored for more strength development with increase in weights used, and decrease in reps performed.

The Surfers Shoulders program can be utilized as a stand-alone program, or can be interspersed within other workouts. For some of you, you would benefit from completing the entire program, while others with less dysfunction in the shoulders could benefit from inclusion of cable facepulls and serratus pushes. Just about everyone should implement the mobility work, tissue work, and stretches, as these have far reaching benefits.

SURF TRAINING SUCCESS

29
CONCLUSION

This program is far from inclusive of all relevant shoulder movements for surf conditioning, and is not a solitary treatment method for the dreaded shoulder funk. What this program does do is incorporate all the basics to creating a well functioning shoulder, by helping you to create a more well functioning upper torso. If your shoulders are giving you issues, your surfing is suffering, and that just plain sucks. Implement these mobility drills, stretches, and movements and help yourself and your surfing.

A few other quick considerations about your shoulders and your workout programs. Across the board, you should be working on more horizontal pulling exercises than pressing exercises. Most people need to improve spinal posture, and too many pressing movements such as dumbbell presses will continue to create tissue tensions on the front of the body, forcing you into the hunched over, rolled forward shoulder posture. So work on more pulling movements. Barbell body rows, one arm dumbbell bent rows, TRX pulls..... the list is exhaustive. Also, focus on some Latissimus Dorsi strength development with some pullups, or straight arm lat pulls. Both are great movements for improving paddle stroke power. I would also highly recommend you get some good manual therapy / massage work. If you've got issues with the shoulders, you've got tissue problems. Some good hands will speed up the entire process, and its great for injury prevention and body upkeep.

Lastly, consult some professionals!!! If you're shoulders are giving you problems, have someone take a look at them. If you're working on program from a health professional and not seeing benefits, find another professional! I've worked with many clients whom have come out of standard physical therapy clinics and workout regimens that still have a lot of dysfunction going on, so seek out some knowledgeable folks, ask a lot of questions, and look for improvement.

STRENGTHEN YOUR SHOULDERS, IMPROVE YOUR SHOULDER RANGE OF MOTION, INCREASE YOUR FLEXIBILITY, IMPROVE YOUR SPINAL POSTURE.............................AND SURF!!