

# SHOULDER SUBLUXATION

## What is a shoulder subluxation?

A shoulder subluxation is a temporary, partial dislocation of the shoulder joint. The shoulder is a ball-and-socket joint. The ball of the upper arm bone is normally held in the socket of the shoulder blade by a group of ligaments. Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect the bones. In a subluxation, the ball of the upper arm bone slips partially out of the shoulder socket.

## How does it occur?

A shoulder subluxation can be caused by:

- a fall onto your outstretched arm
- a direct blow to your shoulder
- having your arm forced into an awkward position

If you have had a previous injury or if your shoulder ligaments are naturally loose, you may sublux your shoulder doing simple activities like throwing or putting on a jacket.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of a shoulder subluxation include:

- the feeling that your shoulder has gone “in and out of joint”
- looseness in your shoulder joint
- pain, weakness, or numbness in your shoulder or arm

## How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and examine you. Many times the diagnosis of a shoulder subluxation is based on your description of the injury. When your provider examines you, he or she may find that your shoulder is loose and may partially slip out of joint during the exam. Your provider may order X-rays to see if you have had any fractures.

## How is it treated?

The pain from a shoulder subluxation is treated by:

- putting ice packs on your shoulder for 20 to 30 minutes 3 to 4 times a day
- taking anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen (adults aged 65 years and older should not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicine for more than 7 days without their healthcare provider’s approval)
- avoiding activities that cause pain

The most important treatment for the shoulder looseness that causes a subluxation is shoulder strengthening exercises. If your shoulder continues to sublux and cause pain and other symptoms, you may need surgery to correct the joint looseness.

## When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon, you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity is determined by how soon your shoulder recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred.

You may safely return to your sport or activity when:

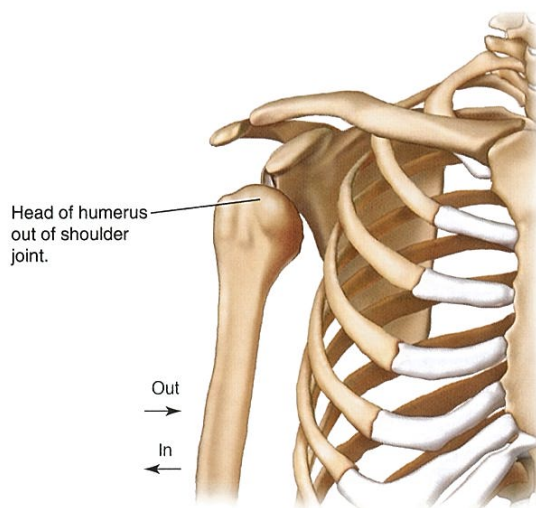
- your injured shoulder has full range of motion without pain
- your injured shoulder has regained normal strength compared to the uninjured shoulder

In throwing sports, you must gradually build your tolerance to throwing. This means you should start with gentle tossing and gradually throw harder.

## How can I prevent a shoulder subluxation?

Shoulder subluxations are often caused by accidents that cannot be prevented. It is important to keep your shoulders strong, especially if you have had a previous shoulder injury.

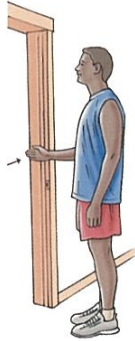
## SHOULDER SUBLUXATION



# SHOULDER SUBLUXATION REHABILITATION EXERCISES

Do these exercises as soon as your healthcare provider says you can.

## Part I



**1. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER EXTERNAL ROTATION:** Standing in a doorway with your elbow bent 90° and the back of your wrist pressing against the door frame, try to press your hand outward into the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

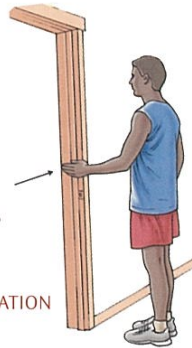
ISOMETRIC SHOULDER EXTERNAL ROTATION



**5. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER EXTENSION:** Standing facing away from the wall with your elbow touching the wall, press the back of your elbow into the wall and hold for 5 seconds. Rest. Do 3 sets of 10.

ISOMETRIC SHOULDER EXTENSION

**2. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER INTERNAL ROTATION:** Standing in a doorway with your elbow bent 90° and the front of your wrist pressing against the door frame, try to press your palm into the door frame. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

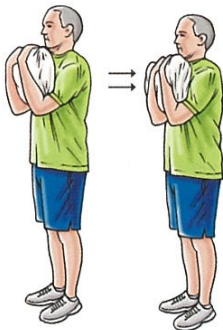


ISOMETRIC SHOULDER INTERNAL ROTATION

**6. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER ABDUCTION:** Standing with one side towards the wall and your elbow bent at a 90-degree angle, press the side of your arm into the wall as if attempting to lift it. Hold for 5 seconds. Rest. Do 3 sets of 10.



ISOMETRIC SHOULDER ABDUCTION



**3. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER ADDUCTION:** With a pillow between your chest and your arms, squeeze the pillow with your arms and squeeze your elbows into your sides and hold 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

ISOMETRIC SHOULDER ADDUCTION



**7. SHOULDER FLEXION:** Stand with your arms hanging down at your side. Keep your elbow straight and lift your arms up over your head as far as you can reach. Hold the end position for 5 seconds. Do this 10 times.

SHOULDER FLEXION

**4. ISOMETRIC SHOULDER FLEXION:** Stand facing a wall with your elbow bent at a right angle and held close to your body. Press your fist forward against the wall, hold this for 5 seconds, then rest. Do 3 sets of 10.



ISOMETRIC SHOULDER FLEXION

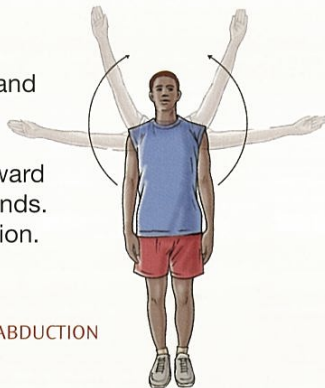
**8. SHOULDER EXTENSION:** Stand with your arms at your sides. Move the arm on one side back, keeping your elbow straight. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Return to the starting position and repeat 10 times.



SHOULDER EXTENSION

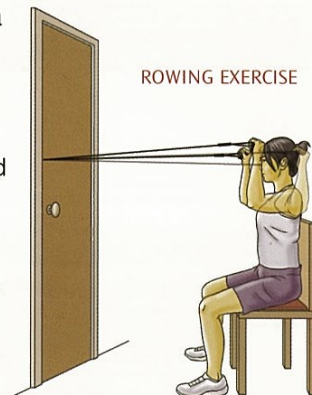
SHOULDER SUBLUXATION REHABILITATION EXERCISES (continued)

**9. SHOULDER ABDUCTION:** Stand with your arms at your sides. Bring your arms up, out to the side, and toward the ceiling. Hold for 5 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10 times.



SHOULDER ABDUCTION

**13. ROWING EXERCISE:** Tie a piece of elastic tubing around an immovable object and grasp the ends in each hand. Keep your forearms vertical and your elbows at shoulder level and bent to 90 degrees. Pull backward on the band and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.



ROWING EXERCISE

Part II

**10. RESISTED SHOULDER INTERNAL ROTATION:** Holding tubing connected to a door knob at waist level, keep your elbow in at your side and rotate your arm inward across your body. Make sure you keep your forearm parallel to the floor. Do 3 sets of 10.



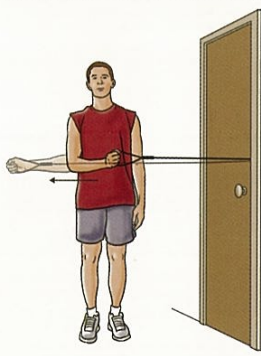
RESISTED SHOULDER INTERNAL ROTATION

**14. HORIZONTAL ABDUCTION:** Lie on a table or the edge of a bed face down with one arm hanging down straight to the floor. Raise your arm out to the side, with your thumbs pointed toward the ceiling until your arms are parallel to the floor. Hold for 2 seconds and then lower it slowly. Start this exercise with no weight. As you get stronger add a light weight or hold a soup can. Do 3 sets of 10.



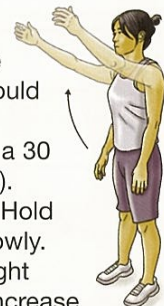
HORIZONTAL ABDUCTION

**11. RESISTED SHOULDER EXTERNAL ROTATION:** Stand sideways next to a door. Rest the hand farthest away from the door across your stomach. With that hand grasp tubing that is connected to a doorknob at waist level. Keeping your elbow in at your side, rotate your arm outward and away from your waist. Make sure you keep your elbow bent 90 degrees and your forearm parallel to the floor. Repeat 10 times. Build up to 3 sets of 10.



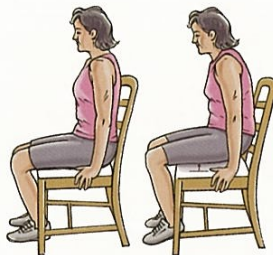
RESISTED SHOULDER EXTERNAL ROTATION

**15. SCAPTION:** Stand with your arms at your sides and with your elbows straight. Slowly raise your arms to eye level. As you raise your arms, they should be spread apart so that they are only slightly in front of your body (at about a 30 degree angle to the front of your body). Point your thumbs toward the ceiling. Hold for 2 seconds and lower your arms slowly. Do 3 sets of 10. Hold a soup can or light weight when doing the exercise and increase the weight as the exercise gets easier. Your provider may instruct you to do this exercise with your thumbs down.



SCAPTION

**12. LATISSIMUS DORSI STRENGTHENING:** Sit on a firm chair. Place your hands on the seat on either side of you. Lift your buttocks off the chair. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.



LATISSIMUS DORSI STRENGTHENING