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SPINE HEALTH

Shoulder & Upper Body Health

Strong, Mobile, Pain-Free

Addressing shoulder tension, rotator cuff issues, and thoracic spine health.

A free patient education guide from our doctors
(630) 289-2225 · freedomwellness.llc · Hoffman Estates, IL

Welcome

Your shoulder is the most mobile joint in the body, letting you reach, throw, lift, and carry. That mobility comes at a price: it relies heavily on muscles and healthy posture for stability.

Shoulder pain often is not just a shoulder problem. The neck, upper back, and shoulder blade all play a role. This guide explains how they work together and how to keep them healthy.

The Shoulder Team

- **Rotator cuff:** four small muscles that keep the ball centered in the socket
- **Scapula (shoulder blade):** the moving base the shoulder works from
- **Thoracic spine (mid-back):** needs to extend and rotate for full overhead motion
- **Cervical spine (neck):** nerves to the shoulder and arm originate here

Common Shoulder and Upper Body Problems

- Upper trapezius tension and 'knots'
- Rotator cuff strain or tendinopathy
- Shoulder impingement-type pain with overhead reaching
- Stiff mid-back from prolonged sitting
- Referred pain from the neck
- Frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis)

The Posture Connection

When the upper back rounds and the shoulders roll forward, the space for rotator cuff tendons can narrow and the shoulder blade may not move optimally. Over time this can contribute to irritation with reaching and lifting. Improving thoracic mobility and shoulder blade control often makes a meaningful difference.

How We Help

- Assessment of neck, mid-back, shoulder blade, and shoulder
- Thoracic and cervical adjustments to restore motion
- Shoulder joint mobilization when appropriate
- Soft tissue therapy for tight muscles

- Rotator cuff and scapular strengthening
- Referral for imaging or orthopedic care when indicated

Simple Exercises to Start

- **Wall angels:** slide arms up and down a wall, 10 reps
- **Band pull-aparts:** 2 sets of 12 with a light resistance band
- **Thoracic extension:** over a foam roller or chair back, 10 slow reps
- **External rotation:** elbow at your side, rotate out against a light band, 12 reps
- **Doorway pec stretch:** hold 30 seconds each side

Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, and check with your doctor for the right progression.

Look Above the Shoulder

If your shoulder pain is accompanied by neck pain, or by numbness and tingling in the arm, the neck may be part of the story. A full upper-body evaluation helps find the true source.

Shoulder Health Checklist

- ☐ Upper back moves freely
- ☐ Shoulders relaxed, not shrugged
- ☐ Strength work twice a week
- ☐ No sleeping on the painful side
- ☐ Overhead lifting with good form
- ☐ Posture breaks at work

Common Questions

Should I rest my shoulder completely?

Usually not. Relative rest from painful activities plus gentle movement tends to work better than immobility.

When do I need an MRI?

If there was significant trauma, marked weakness, or no progress with conservative care, imaging may be appropriate.

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YOUR NEXT STEP

Let's get you feeling your best again.

Reach, lift, and play without pain. Call (630) 289-2225 to schedule.

Book Now: (630) 289-2225

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