

TOP 5 EXERCISES TO PREVENT INJURY!

Band External rotation

This is a fantastic exercise for shoulder health. It does a great job of working the muscles that help control your shoulder and your shoulder blades, but it must be done right! So, let's teach you how!

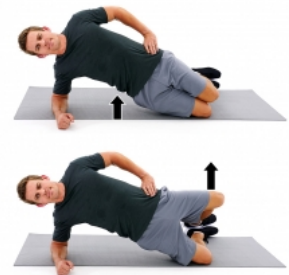
First, take 2 rolled up hand towels and squeeze them to your side with your elbows, next, bend your elbows to 90° and grab a band with palms up. Then rotate your arms out and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Don't shrug your shoulders!!!! You should feel this exercise working the back of your shoulders, shoulder blades, and mid back (perform 2-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions)



Side plank clams

This is a great exercise to help keep your hips and low back strong and healthy. It works on your abs and your butt muscles, which are essential muscles for injury prevention and recovery.

To do this exercise you are going to be on your side with your knees bent to about 45°. You will then position your forearm on the ground so it rests perpendicular to your body. You will then position your upper arm so it is perpendicular to the floor. Next you will raise your hips off the ground with the 2 points of contact on the ground being your forearm and knee/lower leg. While maintaining this position take your knees and move them together and apart. You should feel this exercise working your abs on the side closest to the ground and your butt muscles on both sides! Perform 2-3 sets of 5-20 repetition





Single leg stance

Balance is of vital importance to being healthy. It works the muscles that are responsible for stabilizing all the joints in your body. Not only does it work these muscles, but it also works your brain and nervous system and teaches them how to use all these muscles appropriately.

To do this exercise you will stand next to something you can grab or hold onto if necessary. You will then lift one leg off the ground and bend the knee 45°. From there you will then balance for anywhere from 10 seconds to 1 minute. It is important that when doing this exercise to be close to something you can hold onto if you lose balance. Make sure that the worst case scenario is you grab onto something. If this is too easy then you can hold your arms out in front of you with hands clasped together and think of your arms as a pen and use them to trace the alphabet in front of you. Still easy? Then do all this while standing on a pillow or couch cushion. Perform 2-3 sets of 10 seconds-1 minute or 2-3 sets through the alphabet



Squats

Squats are the most functional movement there is. We are constantly sitting down and standing up, picking things up off the ground, getting up and down off the ground, etc.... So, being strong and squatting properly is essential to life and health because we do it so often.

To perform a squat you will have your feet shoulder width apart with your feet pointing forward or just a little out. Next you will push your butt back and bend your knees, think about how you would sit in a chair, you can even put a chair behind you as you do this exercise. As you perform your squat your weight should be evenly distributed throughout your feet so you are not leaning too far forwards or too far backwards. A common mistake when squatting is allowing your knees to collapse in, think about drawing a line from your hip to your ankle and keeping your knee in that line throughout your squat. Go down to about a chair height and stand back up tall. If this is easy then load it by holding a weight.



Open books

In the physical therapy field we refer to your mid back (thoracic spine) as the great compensator! If you can move well through your mid back it takes stress off of your low back, neck, hips, and shoulders. This is my favorite exercise to help get your mid back moving.

To perform this exercise you will lay on your side and bend your knees up just past your hips. Next you will put both arms together straight out in front of you, you are now a closed book. To open the book you leave the arm closest to the ground on the ground and try to reach the top arm to the ground on the other side of your body twisting through your mid back. Take a deep breathe in and out while you are in the open book position then return to the closed book position and repeat. Perform 2-3 sets of 10.

