

Do's & Don't's

- Avoid the activity/s that started the problem until you have mastered the activities on this page.
- If this problem began with a chronic cough, then try to clear your throat instead of cough.
- Make sure you are breathing in a synchronized manner, described below.
- If you like to sleep on your side, but it causes too much pain, then sleep on your other side with a pillow between your arm & your ribcage on the side with the problem.

Start in the seated position, but with your legs off the side of the chair on the side of the problem. With the hand on the same side of the pain grasp the back of the seat, as pictured. Lean forward so that your forearm is against the back of the chair and your shoulder is under some tension. Rotate your upper body away from the side grasping the chair for 3 deep breaths. Then relax and lean more forward as your shoulder allows. Repeat this 3-5 times & then repeat the whole activity 2-3 times a day.



Seated Self-Stretch

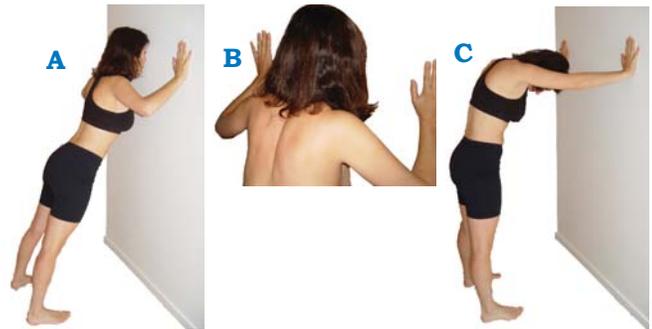
Start in the side-lying position with your arm raised palm-up behind you and over your head. Take a deep breath in while lifting your arm slightly toward the ceiling, holding your breath in for 5 seconds. Then release your breath and allow your muscle contraction to relax. Your arm will probably settle back even more towards the floor. Repeat this 3-5 times & then repeat the whole activity 2-3 times a day.



Side-lying Self-Stretch

Wall Push-ups

Stand at arms length from a wall and place your hands on the wall about shoulder width apart, figure A. Allow your body to go forward toward the wall so that your nose is touching and you allow your shoulder blades to come as close to touching each other as possible, figure B. Then, push away from the wall allowing your neck to bend from the top vertebra down to end with your shoulders maximally pushed away, your neck fully bent with your chin on your chest, and your back arched like a cat, figure C. Hold that position for 2 deep breaths and then return to the start position. Repeat the pushups 8-12 times and then do this 2-3 times a day.



Sometimes, after a surgery or for those of us who hold our bellies in while breathing we teach ourselves incorrectly how to breathe. The following exercise will help us relearn the correct way to breathe and can be done in any position, but only laying and seated positions will be reviewed here. Practice this 2-4 times a day and at bedtime.

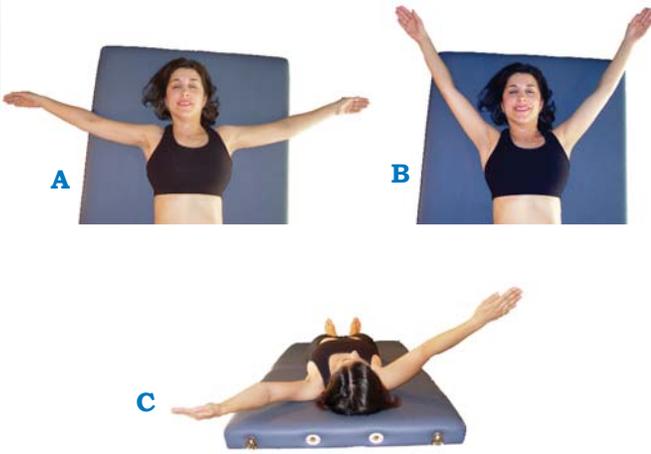
In the laying on the back position, place a hand on you stomach below your belly button and the other hand on your chest. Take a slow, deliberate deep breath and feel your chest and your belly rise together and after a slight pause allow them to fall together. Spend a couple of minutes breathing in this manner (20-30 breaths). Now, practice belly breathing. Taking a deep breath and focusing it all through your tummy, with relatively little chest movement is the practice of belly breathing. Do this for a couple of minutes in a relaxed manner until it feels quite natural. Belly breathing should be your natural way of breathing when lying flat on your back.

In the seated position with a firm flat seat, stick your belly out and arch your back while taking a slow deep breath. Then, allow yourself to slouch as you exhale in a relaxed manner. This exercise reinforces belly breathing in a more upright position. If you are having a hard time mastering it take a belt and fix it around your chest to reinforce the use of your abdomen and not your chest to breath.

Retraining Doggy-style

Shoulder Abduction Retraining

Start by lying down on your back without a pillow & your arms straight out, palms up (figure A). Slide your arms along the floor, as if you were making a snow angel (figure B). If you feel your arm lift off the floor (figure C), stop rotating and stretch your arm out further away from yourself. If you can get your arm back to the floor, then re-start the circular motion again. If you cannot get your arm back to the floor, then that is as far as your should go. Do this exercise 5-7 times & then repeat it 2-3 times a day. Your goal is to stretch your arms above straight up above your head.



Strengthening with Exercise Equipment

Start by sitting down facing away from the machine, as shown in figure A. Push the handgrips away from your body while inhaling deeply to end with your arms extended, as shown in figure B. Hold this position for 2 seconds. Then, allow gravity to slowly return you to the starting position as you inhale. Repeat this action for a total of 8-12 times. Take a 30-90 second break and repeat as directed by your physician or for a total of 3 sets.



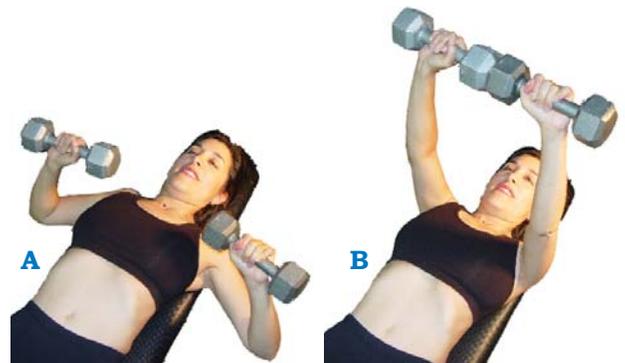
Doggy-style Retraining

Start on all fours, as in figure A below. Then, lift the hand on the side that is not a problem 1-2 inches off the surface upon which you are on, figure B. Hold this position for 5-7 seconds. Repeat this on both sides 5-7 times for 2-3 times a day. If you notice a lot of shaking or your physician notices excessive winging, then more wall push-ups are necessary before continuing to retrain this muscle.



Strengthening with Weights

Start by lying down on your back with 5 lb dumbbells in each hand with your elbows bent & your wrist straight, as shown in figure A. Push the dumbbells away from your body while inhaling deeply to end with your arms extended, as shown in figure B. Hold this position for 2 seconds. Then, allow gravity to slowly return you to the starting position as you inhale. Repeat this action for a total of 8-12 times. Take a 30-90 second break and repeat as directed by your physician or for a total of 3 sets.



Also, Train

- Latissimus dorsi & rhomboid muscles