

Deltoid Strengthening for the Treatment of the Degenerative Shoulder

The deltoid muscle is the outer shoulder musculature that gives our shoulder its contour. It is an important muscle for patients with rotator cuff deficiency as well as a degenerative (arthritic) shoulder joint. For people with an irreparable rotator cuff, the anterior (front) part of the deltoid can be trained to compensate for the loss of the rotator cuff, functioning as a shoulder elevator.

Rockwood et al published a study in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery in 1995 that described the simple deltoid strengthening program shown here. In this study, patients demonstrated a 35% improvement in elevation of the arm at the shoulder following shoulder decompression surgery when the deltoid strengthening program was included in the rehabilitation process. (Rockwood et al, JBJS, June 1995)

Perform Steps 1 through 5, 5 to 10 times.

Hold at Step 5 for 5 to 10 seconds.

Do exercise program 1 to 2 times per day.

Start with 0-2 pounds for 3 weeks.

Then progress to 2 to 5 pounds for 3 to 6 weeks.

Then progress to 5 to 10 pounds maximum.

**Hold with arm
in this position**

