ROTATOR CUFF STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

**Exercise Technique**

1. Elbows must be pressed against your side. An easy way to accomplish this is to hold a thin book between your elbow and your side. If you take your arm away from your side, the book will fall to the floor.
2. Hold your arms in the “finish” position for 10 seconds for each repetition.
3. It is OK if the exercises cause burning in your arms but not sharp pain.
4. Your goal is to perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions of the internal and external rotation exercises, 2 times per day.
**Progression**

Start with an internal rotation set of ten repetitions (1), and then does an external rotation set of ten repetitions (1). Then do an internal rotation set (2), an external rotation set (2), an internal rotation set (3), and finally external rotation set (3).

You can increase the resistance of your exercises by stretching the bands more or by tying them into a smaller loop. If you are using the proper resistance, it should be very difficult to hold the 9th and 10th repetition of your 3rd set for the full 10 seconds. If you have no trouble holding these final repetitions for the full 10 seconds then the resistance for the earlier repetitions was too little. Stretch the bands more with each repetition or tie the band into a smaller loop prior to your next exercise session.

You may increase the resistance as often as you like as long as you can perform the program twice a day with no sharp pains.

**Results**

These exercises will help to eliminate shoulder pain due to impingement or instability in 70% of patients. If they are going to work, they will start to decrease your pain in about 4-6 weeks. They will not eliminate the pain in that period of time but you should start to notice an improvement. If you are no better after 6 weeks then the exercises are not going to work for you and you should schedule a follow up visit with your doctor.

You should eliminate any exercises that you might be doing that are designed to specifically strengthen the deltoid muscle, particularly if the deltoid is strengthened in isolation. Impingement syndrome is caused by an imbalance between the strength of the deltoid and the rotator cuff muscles. To correct the situation you need to selectively strengthen the rotator cuff while avoiding exercising that strengthens the deltoid.

If you don’t do the exercises, they will not work.