

Rhomboid Muscle Strain

Diagnosis Explanation:

A **rhomboid muscle strain** occurs when the **rhomboid muscles (located between the shoulder blades)** are **overstretched or torn**, often due to **poor posture, overuse, heavy lifting, or sudden pulling motions**. Symptoms include **sharp or aching pain between the shoulder blades, tightness, spasms, and discomfort** when moving the shoulders.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Maintain **good posture**, avoid slouching, and take breaks to **stretch the upper back**.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid **heavy lifting, pulling, or reaching behind the back**. Use both hands when possible.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Keep the **shoulders relaxed**, use **lumbar and arm support**, and take **posture breaks every 30 minutes**.
- **Avoid:** Hunching forward, repetitive pulling motions, heavy lifting, and prolonged static postures.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **rowing, throwing, and repetitive arm motions** until pain subsides.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid **pull-ups, rows, shrugs, and overhead presses**; instead, focus on **pain-free, controlled movements**.
- **If you do yoga or Pilates:** Modify poses to **avoid deep shoulder retraction and excessive stretching** of the upper back.
- **Avoid:** Heavy pulling exercises, jerky movements, and activities that strain the upper back.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for muscle and tendon repair.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to relax muscles and prevent spasms.
- **Vitamin C** - 500mg daily to promote collagen synthesis.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to aid muscle healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce swelling.

- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to keep muscles supple.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to prevent muscle tightness and support recovery.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Rhomboid Muscle Strain)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Relaxing the Muscles):

- **RICE Protocol** - Rest, Ice (15-20 min, 3x/day), Compression (gentle massage), Elevation.
- **Shoulder Blade Squeeze (Gentle Activation)** - Pinch shoulder blades together, hold **5 seconds**, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Upper Trap Stretch** - Gently tilt head to the opposite side, hold **20 seconds**, repeat **3x/day**.
- **Foam Rolling (Upper Back, Gentle Pressure)** - Roll over a foam roller, **1-2 minutes, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Improving Mobility & Strength):

- **Wall Angels** - Stand against a wall, raise arms up and down, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Seated Rows (Resistance Band)** - Pull band toward chest while keeping back straight, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Thoracic Extension Stretch (Using a Chair)** - Hands behind head, gently arch backward, hold **10 seconds, 3x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Improving Posture):

- **Reverse Flys (Light Dumbbells or Resistance Band)** - Slowly pull arms outward, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Scapular Stability Exercises (Resistance Band Rows)** - Pull resistance band toward chest, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Posture Training (Seated or Standing with Core Engaged)** - Maintain an upright posture for **1 minute, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook: Your Self-Treatment Guide for Pain Relief* - Clair Davies, NCTMB.
2. *Overcoming Back and Neck Pain: A Proven Program for Recovery and Prevention* - Lisa Morrone, PT.

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Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.