

## Fitness Forum: Use rubber band, if you have a shoulder to try on

*by Copley News Service*

Shoulder injuries can be a major disruption to your exercise schedule. Avoiding them can help you stay on track.

**THE MOVE:** Standing shoulder external rotation with a rubber band.

**WORKS ON:** Small muscles that originate from back of the shoulder blade and extend into the shoulder joint. These muscles help increase stability of the shoulder joint and decrease chances of shoulder injury.

**SHOULDER EXERCISE** - Firefighter Melissa Cleary demonstrates a shoulder external rotation. With a towel tucked between her upper arm and side, she moves a resistance band away from her body with her elbow bent at 90 degrees. CNS Photo.**SETUP:** Attach a rubber band (3-4 feet) to a stable object at the height of your elbow. Grasp the end of the rubber band with your right hand, with your thumb pointing upward. Stand 3 to 4 feet away (length of your rubber band) from the object where the rubber band is attached. Stand sideways to the object so your left shoulder is pointing toward the object. Stand straight with both of your shoulder blades pulled back together. Bend your right elbow at 90 degrees and hold a folded towel between your right elbow and right side of your body. Place your forearm close to your body with your elbow bent at 90 degrees. At this point, the rubber band should have slight tension. If not, move farther away from the object.

**STEP 1:** Begin the exercise by **SLOWLY** moving your forearm away from your body. Continue moving your forearm away from your body until your shoulder reaches the end of your natural range of motion. Maintain your elbow position by holding the folded towel and keep your elbow bent at 90 degrees throughout the exercise.

**STEP 2:** **SLOWLY** bring your forearm back to the starting position.

**REPETITION:** Do eight to 15 repetitions for two to three sets on each shoulder.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Start with a light-resistance rubber band. As you get stronger, replace the rubber band with higher resistance. If you experience shoulder pain during the exercise, consult a physician or a physical therapist.

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