

by Copley News Service

Stretching is one of the key ways to increase shoulder flexibility.

THE MOVE: Step through.

STRETCH IT - To stretch the front of the shoulder, firefighter Michael Nelson lunges in a doorway while keeping a hand at door's edge. CNS Photo by Nadia Borowski Scott.

WORKS ON: This exercise stretches the muscles of the anterior (front) shoulder (pectoralis major and anterior deltoid). This exercise helps improve mobility of the shoulder blade and its ability to retract (shoulder blade moving toward the spine). Lack of flexibility to these areas may lead to shoulder pain.

SET UP: Standing about 6 inches away from the entrance of a doorway, place your left hand against the left frame with fingers pointing up and palm facing forward. Fingers should be at armpit height. Stand close to the left frame but leave enough room to step through the doorway entrance.

STEP 1: Lunge through the doorway with your left leg while keeping your upper body facing forward. Maintain your hand position and place a small amount of pressure against the frame. Keep the left elbow elevated at the same level as the hand. Allow your shoulder blade to move closer to the spine as you step forward past the doorway.

STEP 2: Step back to the starting position and repeat.

REPETITION: Do 20 repetitions for three sets on each side. Perform this exercise two to three times a day.

PRECAUTIONS: Do not lunge too far past the doorway so that your body begins to twist. The position of your elbow is very important. Remember to keep your elbow elevated to prevent aggravating your shoulder.