



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY IMPROVING MOVEMENT IN THE SHOULDERS

Tight Chest Muscles Destroy Your Posture

Your chest muscles play a significant role in your posture. We often talk about rounded shoulders or a rounded, hunched back, but tight, weak, tense chest muscles draw the shoulders forward. This can cause the upper arm bones (humerus) to rotate inward at the shoulder joint.

The Muscles

The pectoral muscles are the main chest muscles but we rarely link these to good posture. They are composed of the pectoralis major and pectoralis minor. The **pectoralis major** begins at the breastbone (sternum) and collarbone and is attached to the humerus. This is directly related to posture, as the rotation of the upper arm bone determines the shape of the shoulders.

The **pectoralis minor** attaches at one end to a thumb-shaped “bump” on the shoulder blade and at the other end it attaches to the ribs in the top of your chest. When the pectoralis minor contracts, it draws the shoulder down and forward. So you can see how it can draw the shoulders forward.

Two other muscles that affect posture are the **brachialis** and the **coracobrachialis**. These are located in your upper arm and the brachialis works with your biceps to bend your elbow and the coracobrachialis brings your arm inward toward your body. Together with the pectorals, they determine the position of your upper arm bones and shoulders.

It's important to stretch the chest muscles and also to strengthen the arm muscles to help prevent a rounded back which can lead to kyphosis or Dowager's Hump. Working these muscles also strengthens the bones.








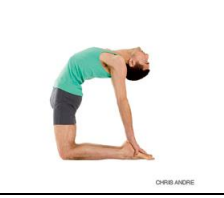
The Shoulder Joint

The shoulder is made up of four joints often referred to as the shoulder girdle. The first joint is where the head of the humerus joins the scapula (shoulder blade). The second joint is where the clavicle (collar bone) meets the scapula. The third joint is more toward the front, where the clavicle joins with the sternum (breast bone). And finally, the fourth joint is where the scapula connects with the ribs at the back of the chest.

All these joints and bones work together to perform movements like raising your arm. Some bones are more prone to fracture than others. The ribs and the collar bone are more likely to fracture if you fall than the shoulder blade or the humerus. Yoga postures can help strengthen all the joints and bones of the shoulder in addition to strengthening your arms and stretching the chest muscles.

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POSTURES TO IMPROVE MOVEMENT IN THE SHOULDERS

<p>DANDASANA (staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the muscles of the chest • Tones the spinal muscles • Stretches the shoulders and chest • Improves posture 	
<p>SALABHASANA (locust)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches the shoulders, chest, belly and thighs • Strengthens the muscles of the spine • Strengthens the backs of the arms • Improves posture 	
<p>DHANURASANA (bow)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the back muscles • Stretches the entire front of the body - ankles, thighs and groins, abdomen and chest and hip flexors • Improves posture 	
<p>TADASANA GOMUKASANA (cow face) The picture is the full posture but it can be practised standing up while in Tadasana.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activates the muscles of the shoulders and back • Stretches the shoulders, armpits, triceps and chest 	
<p>PARSVOTTANASANA (pyramid)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to remove stiffness in the neck, shoulders and elbows • Stretches the spine and shoulders • Improves posture and sense of balance 	
<p>UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA (intense side stretch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrects misalignment of the shoulders and shoulder blades • Stretches the chest, lungs and shoulders • Relieves backache 	
<p>JANU SIRSASANA (head to knee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually corrects curvature of the spine and rounded shoulders • Stretches the spine and shoulders and eases stiffness 	
<p>USTRASANA (camel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches the abdomen, chest and hip flexors • Strengthens back muscles and tones the spine • Increases lung capacity • Improves posture 	
<p>SETUBANDHA SARVANGASANA (bridge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches the chest, neck and spine • Helps alleviate high blood pressure and depression by soothing the brain and expanding the chest • Relieves backache and strengthens the spine 	