







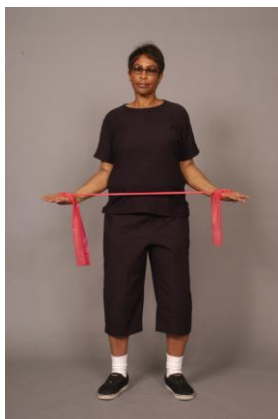

Key Exercises for Muscle Imbalance Syndromes



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<p>Suboccipital Stretch</p>	<p>Sit in chair with your back straight and shoulders pulled back. Gently tuck your chin inward and apply light pressure with your fingers. You should feel a stretch in the back of your neck. Be sure to keep your eyes level; don't bend your neck upward or downward. Hold 10 to 15 seconds and continue to breathe while stretching. Repeat 3 to 4 times.</p>	
<p>Upper Trapezius Stretch</p>	<p>Place the hand of the shoulder you are stretching behind your lower back (the left shoulder in this case). Use your opposite hand on the back of your neck to assist the stretch. Bend your head downward, looking down and toward the shoulder you are stretching (to the left in this case). Hold 10 to 15 seconds and continue to breathe while stretching. Repeat 3 to 4 times.</p>	

<p>Pectoralis Stretch</p>	<p>Extend your arms behind you with elbows straight. Interlock your fingers if possible. Gently lift your elbows upward. You should feel a stretch in your chest. Hold 10 to 15 seconds and continue to breathe while stretching. Repeat 3 to 4 times.</p>	
<p>Hip Flexor Stretch</p>	<p>Sit sideways on the edge of a chair with your back straight and shoulders pulled back. Slowly pull one leg back along your body. You should feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Don't twist your torso. Hold 10 to 15 seconds and continue to breathe while stretching. Repeat 3 to 4 times.</p>	
<p>Hamstring Stretch</p>	<p>Sit in chair and extend one leg forward. Keep knee straight and gently lean forward with hands toward your toes. Be sure and keep your back straight; don't slouch. You should feel a stretch in your hamstrings. Hold 10 to 15 seconds and continue to breathe while stretching. Repeat 3 to 4 times. Don't perform this stretch if it increases leg pain.</p>	

<p>Deep Neck Flexors</p>	<p>Lie on your back. Keeping your chin tucked, gently lift your head off the ground, bringing your chin to your chest to look at your feet. Don't lift your chin toward the ceiling. Hold for 2 to 3 seconds and slowly return to the starting position. Remember to exhale during the muscle contraction. Bend your knees or place one hand under the small of your back for more comfort.</p>	
<p>Lower Trapezius</p>	<p>Begin by grasping ends of a taut elastic band with your elbows bent to 90° by your side. Keep your upper back and neck straight as you squeeze your shoulder blades back and downward, gently pulling the ends of the band away from each other. Keep your elbows at your side. Hold for 2 to 3 seconds and slowly relax. Remember to exhale during the muscle contraction. (Note: Can also be performed in sitting.)</p>	
<p>Middle Trapezius and Rhomboids</p>	<p>Begin by grasping ends of the elastic band at shoulder level with elbows straight in front of the body. Keeping your elbows straight, pull the band outward and across the chest, squeezing your shoulder blades. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds and slowly return to the starting position. Remember to exhale during the muscle contraction. Don't perform this exercise if it causes shoulder pain. (Note: Can also be performed in sitting.)</p>	

<p>Hip Extensors</p>	<p>Loop the center of the elastic band around one ankle. Stabilize band under your other foot and grasp the ends in your hand. Kick your leg backward against the band, keeping your knee straight. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds and slowly return to the starting position. Remember to exhale during the muscle contraction. Use a sturdy chair for support if needed.</p>	
<p>Quadriceps</p>	<p>Loop middle of the elastic band around one ankle. Stabilize the band under your other foot and grasp both ends in one hand. Extend knee to straighten leg against the band. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds and slowly return to the starting position. Remember to exhale during the muscle contraction.</p>	

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