

Shoulder pain is the most common injury in swimmers.

The shoulder is by nature a very shallow ball and socket joint and because of this shallow socket it is the most unstable joint, which makes it prone to dislocations.

Throughout my 15 years of experience as a swim coach and 5 years as a Physical Therapist, I've treated numerous swimmers and other overhead athletes for shoulder pain. I have found that these are the most common reasons why children and teenagers develop shoulder pain in all overhead sports:

- 1.) Children go through growth spurts and often develop MDI (multi directional instability) in the shoulder joint. Due to these growth spurts, the musculature that supports the shoulder girdle and shoulder joint is not yet developed. During a circular movement of the arm, the ball of the joint moves abruptly in the socket without control which then leads to micro trauma in the muscle tendons, ligaments, or cartilage, causing inflammation. These inflamed structures then get pinched in the shoulder joint causing pain (impingement syndrome).
- 2.) Poor posture with rounded shoulders and slouching can cause compression of muscle tendons leading to shoulder discomfort.
- 3.) Poor swimming technique also leads to shoulder pain which is why all JFD coaches place a great emphasis on swimming with ideal technique.
- 4.) Overtraining leads to injuries. If your child does other sports, and has practice before their swim practice, he or she is more likely to develop some type of injury. Reason for this is that before they even get to the pool their muscles are already fatigued which is going to compromise efficient muscle function, technique, and their effort during the practice causing them to skip sets during their swimming practice. Decrease in effort during practice decreases performance at meets.

Shoulder stabilization and postural strengthening exercises are required to prevent shoulder injury.

I created this exercise program which focuses mostly on improving shoulder stability and improving scapular strength and posture. I also included exercises for lower extremity strength and core stability. To benefit from these exercises, they need to be performed with proper form in a controlled manner.

Please note that these exercises are not specifically tailored for every individual. If at any point you develop shoulder pain that persists while swimming and limits how you practice, please consult with a Physical Therapist who will be able to identify which structures are specifically involved and develop an exercise program that is tailored to your needs.

If you have any questions regarding this exercise program please feel free to email me at [JFDMeets@gmail.com](mailto:JFDMeets@gmail.com) or [bcicmil@selectmedical.com](mailto:bcicmil@selectmedical.com)

Thank you.

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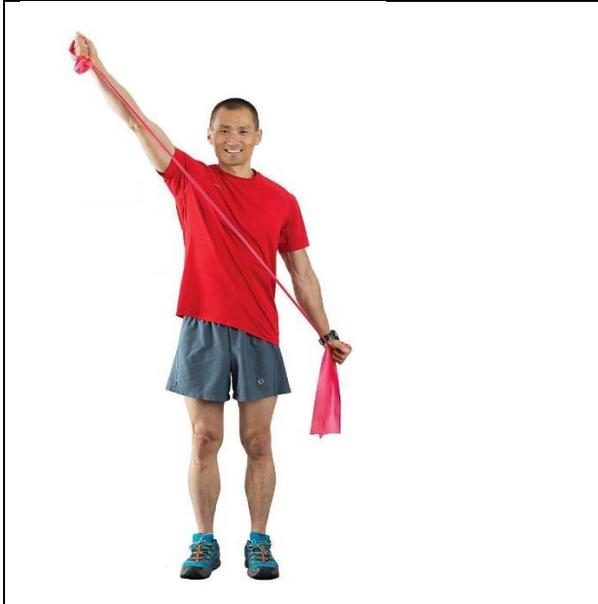
This is the link that I found on Ebay that sells Thera Bands for \$5 and free shipping

<http://www.ebay.com/itm/like/182171667055>

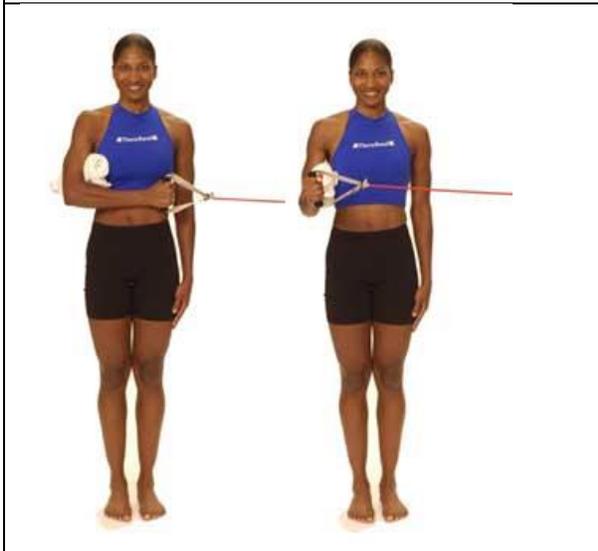
I recommend 13 & Older swimmers to start with Green resistance band and 12 & Under swimmers with Red. After several weeks of doing exercises regularly you can progress to harder band resistance. This is the order of resistance band colors from lowest to hardest: Yellow, Red, Green, Blue, Black, Silver, Gold. Please note that this color coding is just for Thera Band brand other brands have different color coding. These are 5 feet long and 5 inches wide bands.

**Perform each repetition slowly and with control. It should take you 3 seconds to perform single repetition.**

	<p>Shoulder extensions – Hold band ends in each hand, band looped around something sturdy. Arms forward, pull arms back with elbows straight and pinch your shoulder blades together. Repeat 10 times, do 3 sets, 3 times per week.</p>
	<p>Chest pulls – with resistive band in each hand, and arms straight out in front, stretch band across chest. Repeat 10 times, do 3 sets, 3 times per week.</p>



Diagonals – with resistive band in each hand, arms down, bring right arm up and away, keep your thumb up. Repeat 10 times with right then 10 times with left arm, do 2 sets with each arm, 3 times per week.



External Rotation – place a small towel roll under arm. If you are performing exercise with right arm have left shoulder towards the anchor of the band. Elbow bent to 90 degrees, maintain that elbow flexion and rotate your shoulder by pulling hand away from the body. Repeat 10 times, do 2 sets, 3 times per week.



Internal Rotation – Place a small towel under arm. If you are performing exercise with right arm have the same shoulder towards the anchor of the band. Elbow bent to 90 degrees, maintain that elbow flexion and rotate your shoulder by pulling hand across the body. Repeat 10 times, do 2 sets, 3 times per week.



Wall sits – back against the wall, slide down so that knees are at 90 degrees. Make sure toes are in the front of your knees. Hold position for 1 min, do 3 repetitions, 3 times per week.



Side stepping – tie a band into a loop. Place loop around your ankles. Feet parallel, knees slightly bent, side step maintaining tension in the band. Make sure your knees are not facing inward. Side step 20 times in one direction then side step back. Do 3 laps, 3 times per week.



Hip Extension – tie a band into a loop. Place loop around your ankles. Stand up straight and extend your hip backwards while balancing on the other leg. Repeat 10 times, do 2 sets on each leg, 3 times per week.



Squat jump – squat down to 90 degree angle in the knees and jump from squat as high as possible. Make sure you land softly on the ball of your feet, make sure your knees are not facing inward. Repeat 10 times, 3 sets, 3 times per week.



Plank – hold a plank on your elbows and feet. Make sure that your upper and lower back are in line and do not let them sag down. Hold for 30 seconds, do 3 repetitions, 3 times per week. If 30 seconds is not challenging increase the hold time.



Side Plank – on one side hold a plank on your elbow and your feet. Make sure that your hip is not sagging down, maintain body in straight line. Hold for 15 seconds, 3 repetitions on each side, 3 times per week. If 15 seconds is not challenging increase the hold time.



Alternating Upper and Lower extremity lift – Hold push up position and lift up one arm and opposite leg then repeat on the other side. Do not arch your back. Repeat 10 times, do 3 sets, 3 times per week. If this is too much pressure on your wrists perform the exercise on your elbows.