

USA WEEKEND

0-APRIL 1, 2007
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FITSMART:
Get great
shoulders fast



By JORGE CRUISE

No soft shoulders

How to avoid a common injury while you're working out

STARTING A NEW workout regimen? Don't overdo it. "It's ironic that when we start 'taking care of ourselves' by working out, we often cause injury to the shoulder," says Brian Schiff, a physical therapist and co-owner of Fitness Edge, a personal training facility outside Columbus, Ohio. "Sitting at a computer all day and poor posture lead to muscle imbalances. Then add lifting too much weight at the gym or playing weekend sports, and you get shoulder injuries."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 13.7 million people in the United States sought medical care in 2003 for shoulder problems. Poor form, past injury and repetitive strain all can contribute to shoulder pain.

Tips to avoid injury:

1. Consult a professional. Get help with form, correct weight and exercises specifically for you.

2. Avoid these errors. Don't do lateral pull-downs or barbell presses behind your head. And for push-ups, dips, upright rows and bench presses, do not go past a 90-degree angle at the elbow.

3. Strengthen your upper and lower back. In-

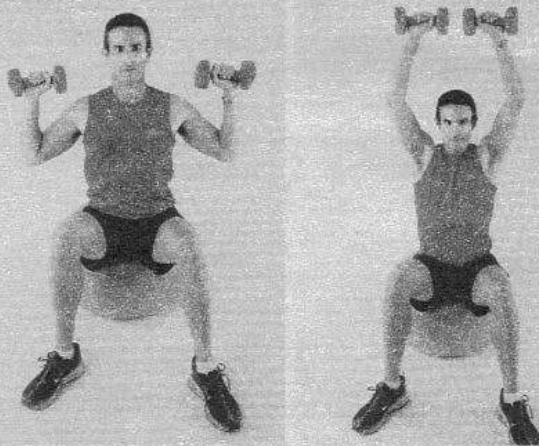
clude rowing and core strength exercises in your workout.

4. Stretch your chest. Sit on a stability ball and roll down until your entire back and head are supported by the ball. Look at the ceiling with knees bent. Let arms hang to the side, palms at shoulder level. Hold for 30 seconds.

Lastly, any pain means that something is wrong. "Pay attention to when and where you feel pain," Schiff says. "Try lifting less weight or modifying the motion. If it can't be done pain-free, stop that exercise. If it doesn't improve in a week to 10 days, see your doctor." **W**

JORGE SAYS: To help strengthen your shoulders, try a couple of my favorite moves — but remember to use proper form. Do each move for 12 to 15 reps.

EXERCISE 1: SHOULDER PRESS



EXERCISE 2: BENT-OVER LATERAL RAISE

