



# Next Step Newsletter

Next Step  
Physical Therapy  
(516) 681- 8070

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*Giving you information and answers to any physical therapy, health or fitness related questions*

## The amazing scapula!!

You're thinking one of two things: 1). Why is the scapula so amazing? or 2). What is a scapula? Let me answer both of those questions, in reverse order. The scapula is better known as your shoulder blade. It's located behind your shoulder and it's vitally important for both your shoulder and neck.

The scapula is the "socket" as well as the "roof" of the shoulder joint. It is responsible for both motion and stability of the joint. The muscles that make the shoulder move, such as the deltoid or the group of muscles called the rotator cuff, all attach to the scapula. When we raise our arm as high as we can overhead, the normal amount of motion is one hundred and eighty degrees. Of that total motion, the scapula contributes one third, or sixty degrees, of that motion.

There are even more muscles that attach to the scapula that do not move the arm. For instance, there are muscles that attach to the rib cage, the thoracic spine (mid-back) and cervical spine (neck). I think many of you have heard of the trapezius muscle. This muscle has many functions, including pinching the shoulder blades together (bringing the shoulders back), shrugging the shoulders, or even side-bending or turning your neck. This important muscle connects to both the scapula and the neck. During neck motions, the scapula provides a stable platform for muscles to perform their specific tasks.

So what happens when the scapula is moving or positioned incorrectly? The answer is that a lot of things can happen. Shoulder pain or neck pain are the most obvious. It's also very possible to have both shoulder and neck pain at the same time as a result of a scapular impairment. What does that exactly mean? Here is an example. If the scapula is positioned too low (have you ever seen a person who had one shoulder that looked lower than the other?) then muscles attached to the neck can be strained, causing neck pain and decreased range of motion. This same condition can also cause a decrease in the scapula's ability to lift up during shoulder movements, which can cause shoulder impingement and rotator cuff tendonitis. The great news is that sometimes by correcting the scapula's position you can actually get rid of both shoulder and neck pain all at once. Two for the price of one...not bad. If your having both neck and shoulder pain you should come in for a courtesy exam. Both pains may be coming from only one problem, your scapula.

**Next Step Physical Therapy would like to thank the following people this month for referring someone to us:**

**Alice Holt, Lilia Escoriza, Shirly Kaye, and the Caruso family.**

S.P. asks " What does your collar bone really do?"

Great question! Your "collar "bone, also known as your clavicle, has a few important roles. First of all it is what connects the scapula and shoulder complex to the rest of the body, which is important because it helps transmit and transfer forces to and from the shoulder to the ribcage and rest of your body. It also plays a role in moving the shoulder, particularly when you reach all the way up as high as you can and also when you reach across your body or behind.

## Updates

**Welcome to the Next Step Newsletter!**

**Win a pair of movie tickets!!**

**The first 2 people to call us with the answer to this question wins a pair of movie tickets.**

**How much range of motion does the scapula perform when you reach up as high as you can ????**

- If you have a friend or family member that you think could use our help please let us know or have them call us.
- If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed here please give us a call.
- If you have a question that you would like to have answered (maybe in the next newsletter) please don't hesitate to call.
- What topics are you interested in and would like to see in the newsletter? Let us know.

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