

Strong Shoulders 1: Shoulder Basics

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Our seemingly simple shoulder joints are actually a quite complex balancing act. Here how this highly mobile 'Ball and Socket' joint is put together:

- Our Shoulder Blade (a.k.a. Scapula) provides the Socket portion, and the top end of the upper arm bone (a.k.a. Humerus) provides the Ball portion of the joint.
- The shoulder blade floats over the ribs of our upper back moved by connections from various muscles. These muscles attach to the spine, ribs and base of the skull and can move the shoulder blade in many different directions. The strength and coordination of these muscles is critical to a healthy and mobile shoulder.
- The 'ball' of the upper arm bone is kept snug to the 'socket' of the shoulder blade by the 'Rotator Cuff' muscles. The shoulder is the most flexible joint in the body which is why we have such great shoulder movement; HOWEVER, this also means this is one of the least stable joints in the body so it's important that we keep the supporting muscles strong!
- If you want to avoid discomfort, you need to understand how the lever principle, safe upper back posture and neutral joint positioning affect the shoulder joint ...see our other shoulder handouts for more...



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