

Strong Shoulders 4: Put Your Shoulder in Neutral

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- Even old Blacksmith manuals provide ErgoTips on how to maximize productivity and power by making sure the anvil was in the best position to minimize stress on the shoulder.
- So now, it's 100 years later and we've continued to build on the experience and knowledge of our elders – RIGHT? I'm sure that YOU take the time to fit your work area to you – RIGHT? If your work is too high or too far away or awkwardly positioned, your shoulder can suffer.
- Look for opportunities to position your work so your elbows are close to the side of your body and you don't have to reach or twist to access your work.
- Always try to avoid working with your hands above shoulder height or with your elbows away from the side of the body, however, when you must reach, keep the rule of 20 degrees in mind.
 - o From hanging at the side of your body, swing your arms 20 degrees forwards and 20 degrees sideways. Try to keep your work within this range.
 - o Never reach across your vertical midline, keep your hands on their respective sides, keep the elbows pointing to the ground, and as much as possible avoid using overhand grip.
 - o Never reach behind your body, turn to face what you are doing. YES, the back seat of your car is behind your body!
- It's also important to understand that the Rotator Cuff muscles are small and not very powerful, yet they must put up with a potential 2 foot long lever (your arm) that may extend at any time without notice, while sometimes holding onto something! Holding a 5lb weight at arms length can put up to 10x (50lbs) of force on the shoulder joint. Respecting our limitations can keep our shoulders healthy for years to come.



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This article was written by ErgoRisk

