

Patty's PT Tips

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Better Band Exercises for Boosting the Upper Body

How to begin strengthening:

Assist the movement with a strap, stick or the other side of the body if you can't tolerate the resistance of the bands. Concentrate on the muscles that may help you move the weak muscles with the use of the tool.

If you have mobility through the full range of the joints, use all the muscle activity you have available to create the movement. This includes postural muscles. This is where a PT, OT or an exercise specialist can help you figure out the best exercises. Their instructions can help you coordinate the right movements.

Isokinetic exercise is a way to begin a strengthening program where you can use your own muscles to "push through" the motion. It can be done anywhere/anytime. No equipment needed except your own body. Think of all your muscles working like strong rubber bands as you pull and push through a motion. To increase the difficulty, use resistance bands to load the effort in a way that is gentle to the joints.

Quality not quantity is super important, but you must add quantity to get stronger.

Today's Practice: Isokinetic Exercise for the upper extremities-with and without bands.

Warm ups:

5 to 10 repetitions should be sufficient to loosen up your joints and "check in" with your body.

- Scapular/neck stabilization-shoulders up, down, forward and back with neck held stable
- Hand gripping and opening. Wrist circles. Perform with a "long neck" and chin tucked.
- Elbow flexion/extension. Palms up/palms down.
- Shoulder rotational movements-many, many options because the shoulder joint allows for lots of motion. Play with these and see where your limitations are. Include some neck and

upper body rotation. Improved spinal rotation can help mobility in your shoulders and upper extremity joints.

Ask for professional help! No one can know everything that is possible or needs correction. Professionals can help figure out ways to overcome your losses or make the most of what you have available. Ask LOTS of questions. Figure out what are **your functional goals**: i.e put objects on a higher shelf, push body weight up to lift your butt out of a chair... Your goals will help your therapist design the best exercise recommendations.