



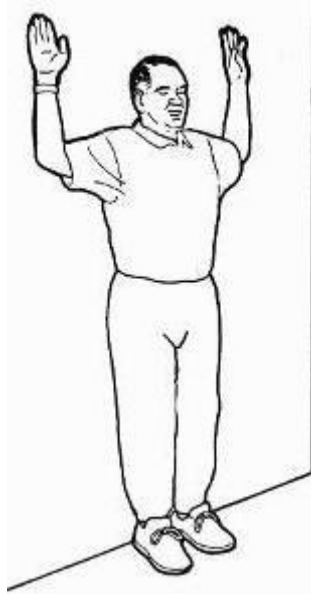
Shoulder and upper body flexibility are things we assess and treat all the time as Physical Therapists. Having full mobility is something many people take for granted and as we age, or if we have had prior injuries, it is something that gets overlooked and in the future can be a cause of future injuries. Because tightness in the upper back, neck and shoulder is often related to muscle pain and stiffness, testing your shoulder flexibility may help determine your risk for future pain and injury. Here are a few simple tests you can do at home to see how your mobility stacks up.

The Reach Test



- To test your left shoulder flexibility, raise your right arm straight up overhead.
 - Bend your right elbow and let your right palm rest on the back of your neck and slide it down your back and between your shoulder blades.
 - Reach behind you with your left hand so the back of your hand rests on the middle of your back.
 - Now slide your right hand down and your left hand up to try to touch the fingers of both hands.
 - Measure the minimum distance between the fingertips of the right and left hand. Record any overlap as well.
 - Switch your hands to perform the test on the opposite shoulder.
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- **Excellent = Fingers overlap**
 - **Good = Fingers touch**
 - **Average = Fingers are less than two inches apart**
 - **Poor = Fingers are more than two inches apart**

The Wall Posture Test



- Set up with your back against the wall, and your heels four inches away from the wall.
- Make sure your lower back is flat against the wall, and make a double chin while keeping the back of your head against the wall.
- Place your arms and elbows against the wall and slowly try to slide them up the wall, without breaking contact.
 - **If you can't keep your arms in contact with the wall the entire way overhead without moving your head into a forward posture, arching your back, or moving your feet away from the wall, then you have failed!**
 - **Also if you experience any neck or shoulder pain during the test is a "fail," too.**

If you have failed one, or both of these tests, doing a simple stretching program can help you improve your mobility and hopefully help prevent future pain or injury. If you have severe limitations, it may be time to see the experts at Blue Hills Sports & Spine Rehabilitation.