

THE PILATES GATHERING 2018 SHOULDER REFORMER SESSION NOTES

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INTRO

Introduction and review of relevant shoulder girdle anatomy.
Break down of Thoracic spine, ribs and sternum. Scapula and Gleno-humeral joint.

WARM UP MOVES

Footwork, arms in straps and 100s warm up

THORACIC POSITIONING, AWARENESS AND MOBILITY

Thoracic spine position is crucial for effective shoulder girdle function. The ability of the scapulae to move, is aided by the ribs moving to allow the full scapulae range. Thoracic mobility allows the clavicles to “open” and create space at the anterior GH joint. Tissues can lengthen and glide/slide easily if allowed to, over the bony skeleton.

THORACIC EXTENSION with The “Sternal lift” (lift your heart!)

One hand on upper sternum (manubrium), other on lower ribs. Lift sternum and keep lower ribs still in order to encourage upper thoracic extension movement. Add a sniff to get that little bit more space!

It is crucial to be able to achieve this position with fluidity and when needed, to be able to stabilise this position.

SCAPULA BOOGIE

Scapula awareness moves - Put your hand on the opposite scapula and feel all the movements that it can achieve.

GLENOHUMERAL POSITION

Be aware of head of humerus sitting in the glenoid. Does it glide forward too far? Does it stay where it is ?

CHEST EXPANSION -

1. Sitting with straps on humerus at 80 degrees abduction.
Lengthen (Opposition) through elbows and maintain sternal lift whilst doing small horizontal flex /extension.
2. Pull straps into horizontal flex/extension maintaining thoracic positioning.
3. Pulses - Dynamic challenge to thoracic position.

FRONT ROWING

1. Arm Reach - Focus on serrates activation! Add Scapular plus (extra lengthen into fingers).
2. Offering - Targets movement control in horizontal plane.
3. Arm Circles - Targets multi planer control !

BACK ROWING

Round Back - Shoulder stability integration into body flow.

Back rowing - Maintain shoulder girdle stability to allow trunk work

Ensure that on elbow extension you “lengthen” to encourage rotator cuff activity and serrates activation and reduce scapula retraction.

THORACIC ROTATION

1. Sitting with straps

Exhale and rotate pulling elbows back to give direction, other arm reached out to front to give pivoting movement. Pelvis stable and rotation through the thoracic spine.

2. Side Sit on box - strap on humerus. Arms in "cossack" - Rotate and back with control keeping fists connected and in line with sternum. Use magic circle to aid rotation "feeling".

3. Kneeling on box, side on to the reformer, one hand on carriage. Opposite hand reaches under (thread the needle) and presses the shoulder rest to encourage thoracic rotation.

SCAPULA PATTERNING AND STABILITY

SHOULDER PUSH - Kneeling (flat back)

1. Scapula telescoping in kneeling, arms long. Do scapula elevation and depression.

2. Elbows bend and stretch - maintain scapula stability - Use serrates cue

3. Single arm 1 and 2 !

4. Single arm patterning - Elbow flexed and thread needle, elbow extend and rotate away (salute). This introduces rotation patterns including glenoid moving around humerus under load which is great for cuff feedback

5. Do "4" in different kneeling positions

MERMAID VARIATIONS

Mermaid Sitting - Sitting pelvis balanced, hand on bar ahead of body to ensure caption and ability to feel slight external rotation and serrates engagement. Think about glen humeral stability Variations:

1. Straight arm.

2. Elbow bent to straight on push out

3. With twist and then elbow bend, scapula control and thoracic extension

4. GET DYNAMIC - Side arm jumps

GLENOHUMERAL STABILITY

SIDE ARM WORK

Sit on box to side.

Lateral/medial GH rotation. Key points are glenoid stability on a stable scapula - Ensure scapula retraction is not happening. Ensure glenoid does not move anteriorly during movement. Use posterior deltoid cue or manually with finger over posterior joint to encourage neutral position.

Diagonal patterns

1. "Draw sword" or "back hand"

2. Side bend and added twist - Arm rearing up into side bend. Add oblique twists to create variety of challenge

Use pattern commands - engage shoulder, thoracic lift and rotate, scapula engage and rolling joint to reach up and backwards

STAR - VARIATIONS

1. Knees bent and on carriage Support on elbows and then activate shoulder girdle with rib lift, push into elbow to stabilise shoulder. Lengthen legs to create torso/shoulder girdle challenge
2. Elbow straight

SIDE STRETCH

1. Elbow straight - challenges shoulder girdle stability whilst whole body moves
2. Elbow bends - challenges shoulder stability whilst elbow bends

LONG STRETCH VARIATIONS

1. Prep variations - Knees on carriage / Use box instead of footbar if needed / Lean on elbows
A) Hold to stabilise (plank) B) Move Chest over footbar
Key points - Scapula stability, trunk/ hip stability, cervical positioning, breathing
2. Lengthen and connect then add thread the needle and salute

PULLING STRAPS

Use long box./ prone Variations to get extensor integration. Can do "Blackburn variations for scapula/cuff focus.

1. Pull straps to hips. (Hold and various speed moving variations)
2. Pull straps to right angles
3. Pull straps with rotated humerus (external and internal) aware of controlling humeral head.

PUSHING STRAPS - BREAST STROKE

Use Long box. Opposition into fingers gives fantastic shoulder girdle connections and the "unstable ropes"

1. Reach out and do scapula elevation/depression

INTEGRATION

Sitting and progress to kneeling. Straps behind or in front.

PRIMED AND READY - Achieving the "cocked" position.

Culmination of effective joint and tissue mobility which allows full elastic tissue recoil.

Muscle, fascia, neural etc length and inter-tissue mobility.

Thoracic extension and rotation

Scapula rotation and posterior tilt

Glenohumeral lateral rotation and elevation.

Looking forward.....

TWIST/SNAKE - Shoulder stability whilst the trunk moves

Get a video of these moves by emailing
info@ergotonics.com