

❖ Practice Lab

Scapular Mobilization: Protraction and Retraction

Starting Position

Position the patient in supine. Elevate the bed for body mechanics.

Handling

1. Stand facing your patient, on the involved side.
 2. Place your patient's involved arm between your humerus and your trunk.
 3. Support the weight of the arm at the elbow.
 4. Place your other hand under the scapula.
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5. With a flat, open hand, move the scapula into protraction, bringing the medial border of the scapula away from the spine. Your hand along the scapula does all of the work—do not pull on the elbow.
 6. Go to the end range of scapular protraction (where you feel resistance or the patient experiences discomfort, no further). Hold for a few seconds and return to the resting position.
 7. Combine the movements of elevation and protraction, making a circular motion of the scapula: elevation, protraction, depression and slight retraction.



Variations

If your patient has a heavy arm, reposition the patient in sidelying on the less involved side. The involved side is more accessible and easier to mobilize.



Common Mistakes

Don't curl your fingers around the medial border of the scapula. Use a flat, open hand and curve your fingers just enough to match the curved contour of the scapula.