

Loosening the Upper and Middle Back

These movements focus on muscles that connect the shoulder blades to the skeleton. They are very important postural muscles. Also, it's important for these muscles to be even and loose, so that they don't pull your spine out of alignment. As with all Somatics movements, do these movements very SLOWLY, with a lot of attention to the sensation in the muscles you're moving.

Do each movement several times. Stop to rest whenever you feel you need it.

1. (Contracting and releasing upper trapezius)

On stomach, head Right, Right hand near face, elbow straight out from shoulder joint.

As you inhale, slowly raise your elbow off the floor, keeping your hand on the floor. Feel the muscles at the back of your shoulders where they go into the neck. This is where you're contracting. Very slowly as you exhale, lower your elbow, feeling your shoulder come all the way back down. Make sure you relax your shoulder until it can't go down any further.

2. (Contracting and releasing middle trapezius and rhomboids)

On stomach, head Right, Right hand behind your back.

As you inhale, slowly raise your shoulder and elbow toward the ceiling. Feel the muscles pulling your shoulder blade back toward your spine. This is where you're contracting. Very slowly as you exhale, lower your elbow and shoulder, feeling them come all the way back down, maybe even further down than where they started.

3. (Contracting and releasing lower trapezius)

On stomach, head Right, Right hand near face, elbow straight out from shoulder joint.

As you inhale, slowly raise your shoulder, but keep your elbow on the floor. Your shoulder blade will be moving down toward your opposite hip. Very slowly, release your shoulder blade and shoulder back to a relaxed position.

4. Repeat exercises 1–3 on the other side.

5. (Contracting and releasing serratus anterior muscles that connect shoulder blade to ribs)

On back, knees either bent or straight.

Several times, slowly reach your straight Right arm up toward the ceiling, then let your shoulder come back to the floor, keeping your arm straight and upright. Each time, feel the motion of your shoulder blade away from your spine as you reach up, then back toward your spine as you relax back down. Do the same with the Left arm.

Put both arms up and alternate reaching up, first with one arm, then the other. Feel how your shoulder blades are working to do this movement. Feel the contraction and release of your ribs as you reach up and then relax.