

# Upper Arms & Shoulders

Week 7: Reach for Deep Shoulder Stability

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Practice Tools

## PRACTICE TOOLS

Along with watching the videos and practicing with them, there are more ways to explore. I encourage you to use the following prompts or discover through other ways that come naturally to you.

### I. CONTEMPLATION / JOURNAL

Open up your journal (or your device) and let your thoughts pour out. Perhaps using these questions might help you launch or give you some direction as you write.

- How does the rotation of your humeral head in its socket lead to greater stability and lead you to make contact with the full surface of your humeral head? How might the excursioning of your socket over the humeral head lead you to attain dexterous, graceful movement?
- As you explore the movements, have you discovered any blind spots within this range of motion? Unfamiliar, skipped or inaccessible?
- In light of the new material, our workshop, and your personal practice from these past weeks, reflect back on the insights and goals that came out of your personal assessment (from the course's launch.)

### II. MOVE

Take the unlocking movements one step farther by exploring a few asanas, yoga postures. You have two ways set up for you to do so.

1. Practice with the Move video for a short, delicious sequence that focuses in on our week's content.
2. Explore the same asanas using the key focuses on the next few pages, but also see where else your body might naturally want to move, inviting your growing awareness and presence within your shoulders to play in (become an active player within the coordinated movement).

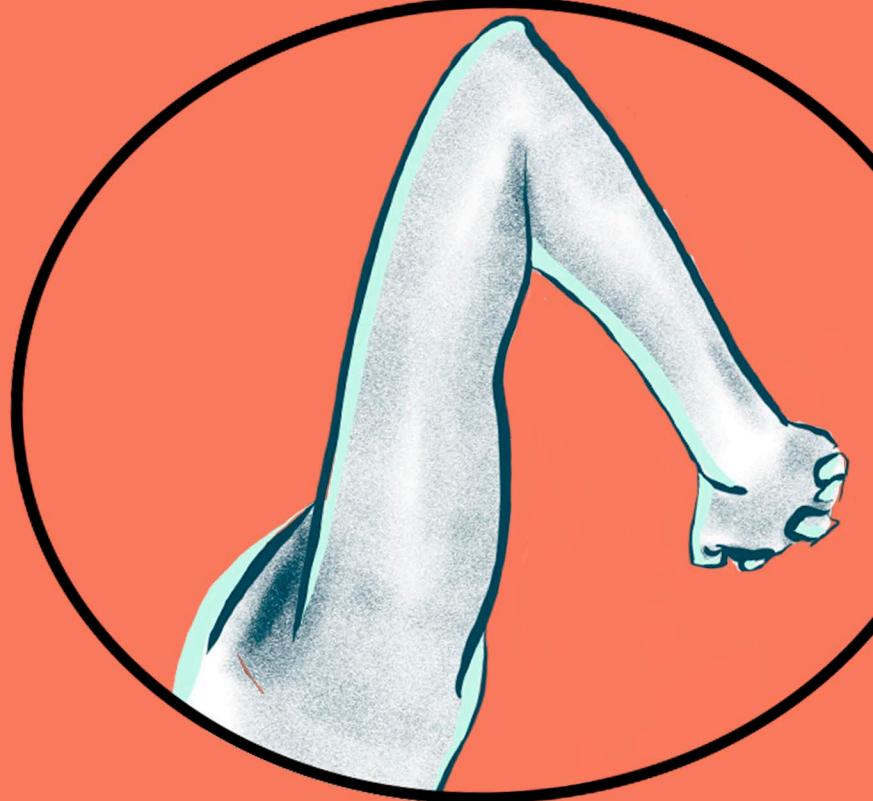
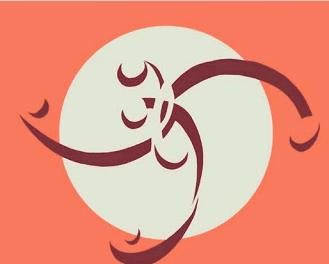
### III. GEEK OUT

Investigate your shoulder joint and the muscles explored this week, painting a picture in your mind. Start with these anatomy slides. Let your curiosity get the best of you and investigate further if you'd like, looking into an anatomy book or researching online.

### IV. VISUALIZE

Visualization invites concepts to come alive through concrete examples as well as through abstractions. Take time to focus on a visual to see where it takes you, what it brings into focus or what it allows to dissolve within you.

The visual: Sketches by Cezanne. The first two are of Cupid. Commonly depicted with a bow and arrow, these beautiful, armless Cupids reveal the true reach and power of our arms. While missing his arms, his body language is fluid and confident. We also have a view of how the socket, the fossa of the glenoid, orients and reaches in the direction of the limb. The final sketch shows a man with his head resting in his palms. I love how his whole body flows with the reach of his arms into the pose. What comes up for you?



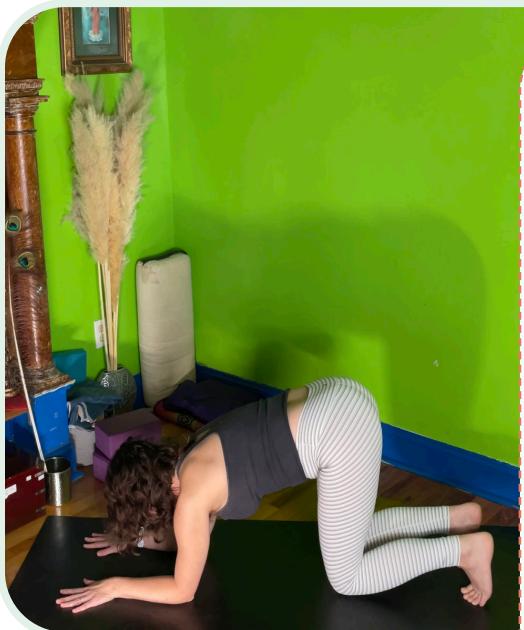
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Practice Tools: Move

# 1. DOLPHIN/FOREARM PLANK



## KEY FOCUS:

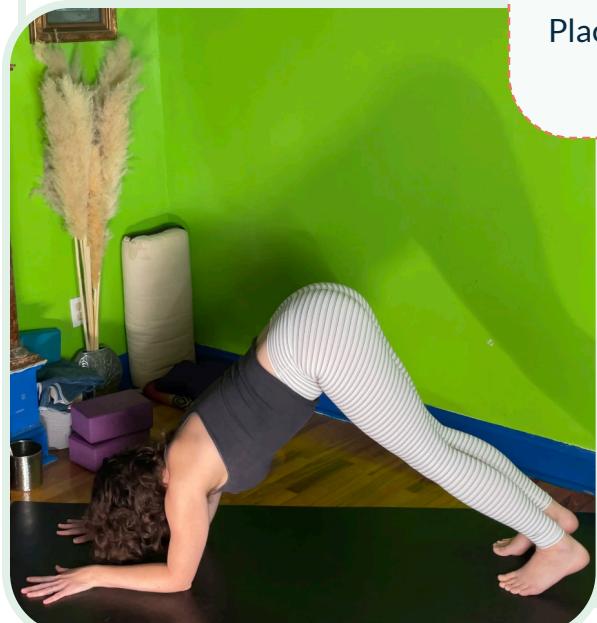
Ground your hands and forearms. Pull outward at your outer wrists, engage triceps and external rotators in and around from behind. This way, all internal rotators are engaged at a length and support the position rather than lead to a collapse (pulling upper arms internally). Collar bones spread and elbows hug in with these actions, otherwise elbows fall apart and weight drops into chest and neck.

The humeral head needs to balance upward in the socket, not push forward or fall backward. Take the pose in stages as each variation requires a refreshed reach towards shoulder stability.

Press into your feet to activate your legs. Lift femur heads in their sockets (different from lifting into the back of your knees). How does this parallel/support spacious engagement in your shoulders?

## Useful modifications:

Add a block or two between your hands to begin from a more neutral shoulder, with less rotation. Place elbows and wrists on top of blocks and keep knees down, lessen the weight in your shoulders. Stand with your elbows on a wall, shifting them lower/higher as you step towards and away.



## 2. CROCODILE VARIATIONS



### KEY FOCUS:

Start by pressing your fingertips down, doming your palms up until your armpits also dome up, deepening the ball in socket. Lift one arm at a time to focus on your glenoid fossa, your socket, extending with the reach of your arm. If your armpit drops, back out, bringing fingertips down again. Use the depth of the armpit within the active reach to determine the variations you play with, to indicate the reach that you are able to support in this given moment.

With arms overhead, extend back into your legs. Balance the reach you want by rooting into your pubic bones and stretching back towards your toes. Try opposite and same side leg lifts.

How does shoulder alignment parallel your neck alignment? If armpits drop so will your throat. If your sockets reach onto your arms, your torso will extend into the lift and reach of your head.

### Useful modifications:

Keep your forehead pressing down onto the floor to support the engagement of your front body  
Squeeze a block between your upper thighs, shins or inner edges of your feet for leg power  
Put a thick blanket or half blocks under your upper arms, press fingertips down to lift armpits



### 3. HANDSTAND



#### KEY FOCUS:

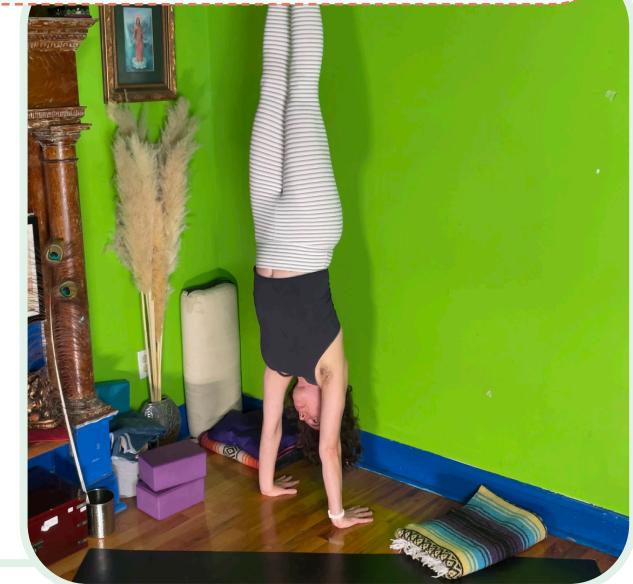
Practice bringing your shoulders over your fingertips. The grip of your fingertips matches the active cap of your deltoids to keep your shoulders from falling forward. Press your sockets down onto your upper arms to extend your side body and to hop up- bring your hips over your heart.

If your lats and pecs are not able to stabilize at a length, you will not have the reach to get your heart over your hands. Press outer wrists apart, externally rotate and then again reach sockets onto your upper arms to stabilize your internal rotators while actively reaching.

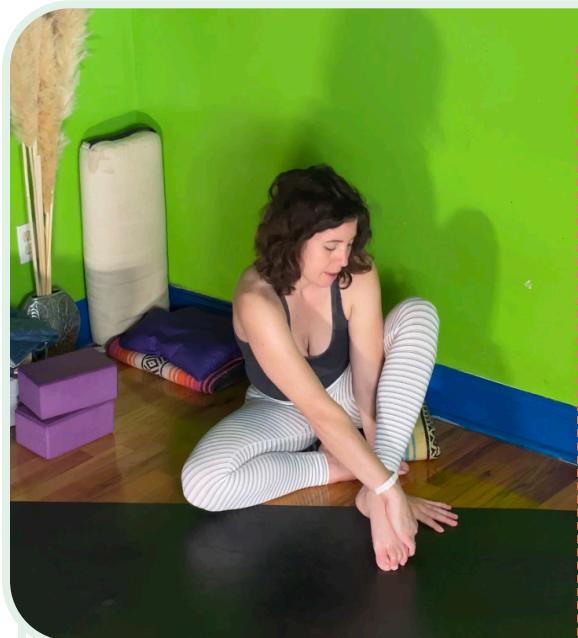
Neck alignment plays in here as well. If your gaze is straining forward, armpits will likely collapse and clamp down onto your sidebody, losing the active reach of your sockets into arms overhead.

#### Useful modifications:

L-pose- From hands and knees feet at the wall, lift your hips and walk feet up (heels hip height)  
Put your feet onto the seat of a chair to get your hips up, lift one leg at a time, shoulders active



## 4. SUNDIAL POSE

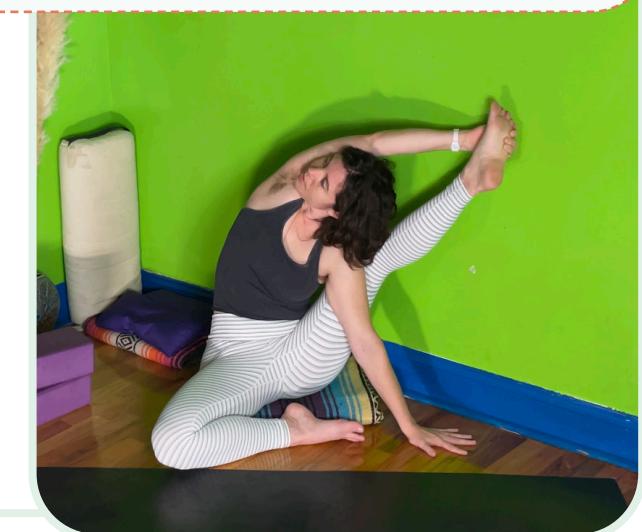
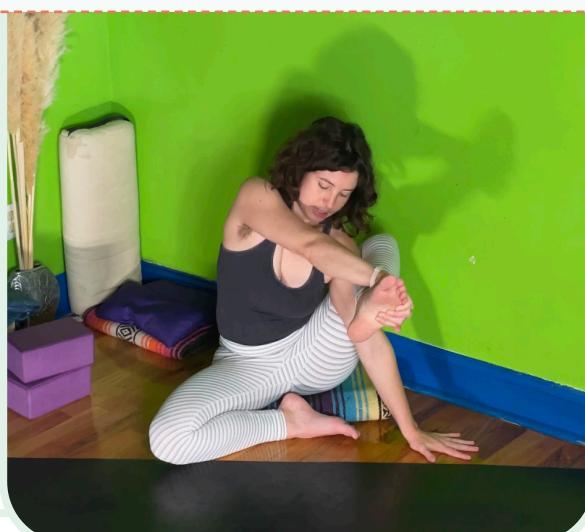


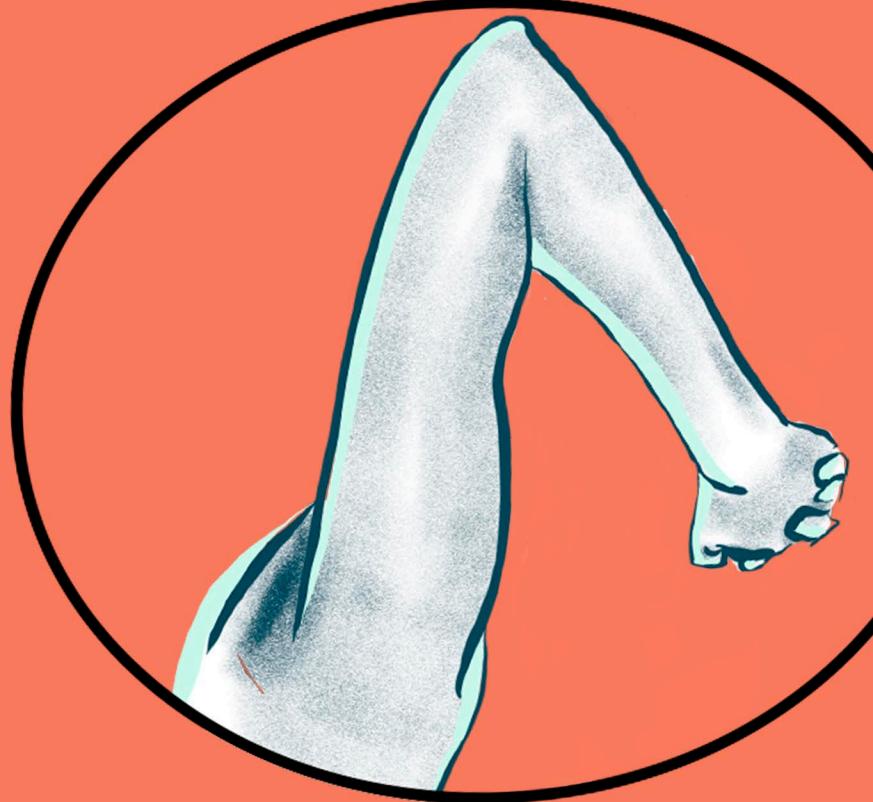
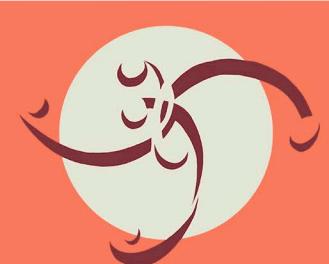
**KEY FOCUS:**  
Take time to warm up your hips so that your sit bones can actively slide back, femur heads pitched back into your glutes, to keep your back supported throughout the pose. The hand that reaches for your foot sets up its reach and depth of socket first. Then bring your leg as far up your other arm as possible so your arm can extend to the mat. Press your arm backwards into your leg, engaging your triceps and external rotators to deepen and reach. Lastly, use the reach of both sockets towards their respective hand to spin your torso and kick up into your top hand.

Notice the alternating sequence with the pictures. Leaning forward/reaching forward, and then drawing back and around. This pulsation keeps the pose dynamic- drawing in and extending out. The final pose engages both at the same time, signifying the reach is coming from deep stability.



**Useful modifications:**  
Standing, one foot steps down onto a high chair, opposite hand reaches towards the lifted foot, underarm aims to push into the chair as your foot lifts off. Practice just this transition, butt back  
Take revolved janu sirsasana first, to work the reach of your top arm before adding the lifted





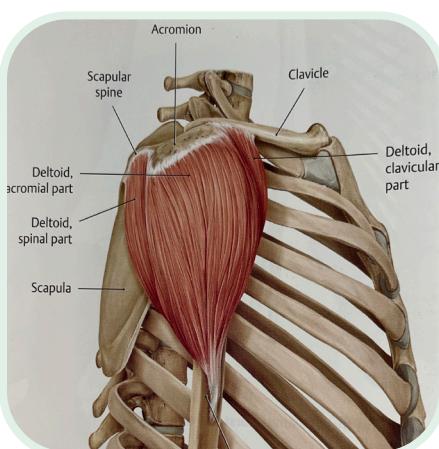
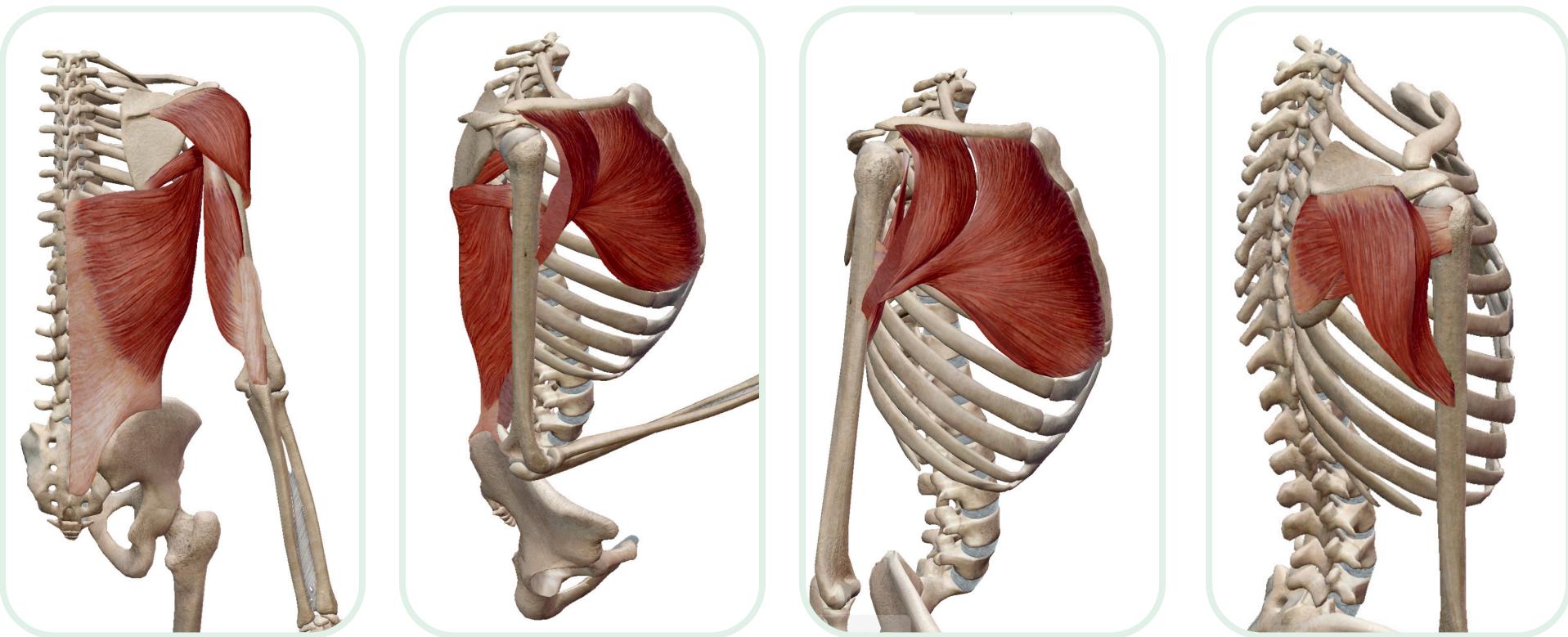
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Practice Tools: Anatomy

# ANATOMY POV: POSTERIOR & LATERAL (4)



## Muscle Groups by Action (Left to Right):

Posterior muscles that extend the arm (lats, tricep long head, teres major, posterior deltoid)

Muscles that internally rotate the arm (subscapularis, lats, teres major, pec major, anterior deltoid)

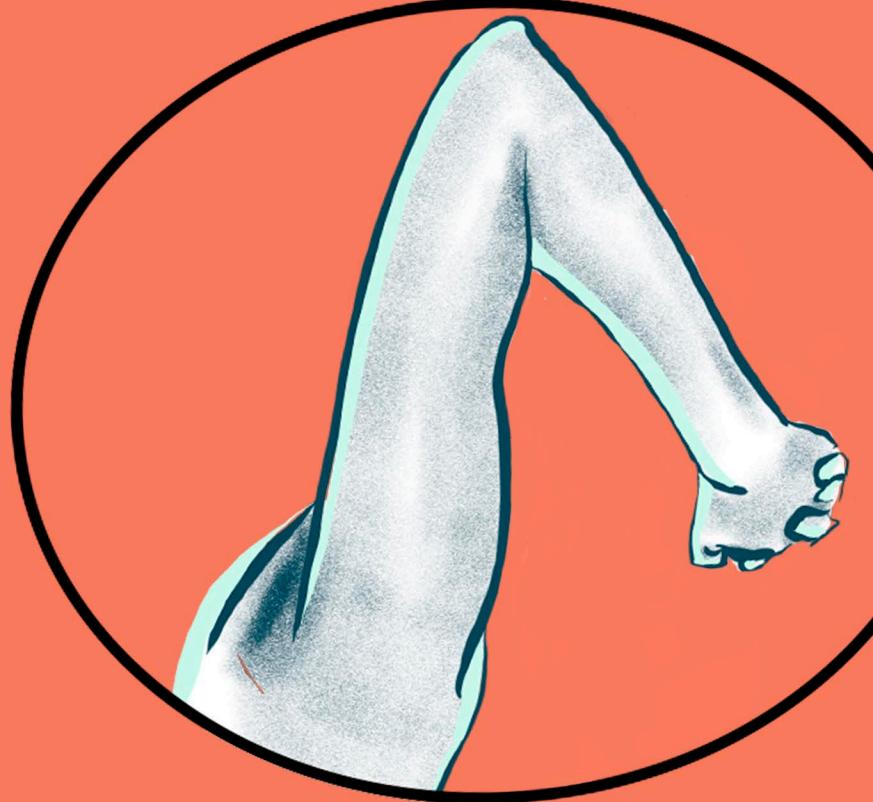
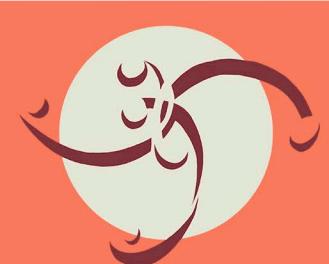
Anterior muscles that flex the arm (pec major, coracobrachialis, anterior deltoid)

Muscles that externally rotate the arm (infraspinatus, teres minor, posterior deltoid)

Full deltoid- all 3 portions (clavicular/anterior, acromial/lateral, spinal/posterior)- bottom left

Note the flexors and the extensors groups, most are also internal rotators, all of them are adductors.

Compare them to the few external rotators and the abductors (Not pictured: the supraspinatus and the lateral deltoid). In each view, note the attachments of the different portions of the deltoid.



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Practice Tools: Visuals



Sketch of Cupid from the Cezanne Drawings exhibit at the Moma sketch by Paul Cezanne



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Cezanne Drawings exhibit at the Moma sketch by Paul Cezanne