

# THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

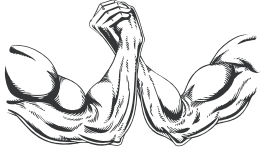
Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW

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## WELCOME TO THE ARM FARM

BY SAM GRIMM, MAT, ATC, LAT



Do you ever have pain, soreness, or fatigue in your shoulder, elbow, or wrist after a long day at work? If so, it's time to take action. Don't wait until the pain sets in to start strengthening! Strengthening your body helps prepare you for your job and allows you to work faster and longer with reduced risk of injury. The muscles around your arms are a great place to start!

### STRONG IS NEVER WRONG

Injury prevention practice can primarily focus on reducing hazards, decreasing workloads, and altering administrative or engineering controls to change the way someone works. But, even with good ergo practices in place, an industrial athlete often still has to work in awkward positions or manipulate a load. These situations place altered forces on the muscles, increases level of fatigability in the muscles, and ultimately leads to the "aches and pains" we feel. We typically tend to stretch out those "aches and pains," but studies have shown that strengthening is a better way to reduce discomfort AND prevent it from returning.

### SHOULDER THE BURDEN

When working with heavy objects or in awkward positions, our shoulders take on a majority of the stress. Although there are things you can do, (like keeping your elbows in and thumbs up or using proper lifting postures) sometimes it's not feasible and our shoulders are forced to take the brunt of the load. Strengthening our shoulders can help when the other preventative measures are not realistic.

Shoulder, scapular, and thoracic spine mobility, stability and neuromuscular control play a large role in workplace injuries associated with overhead-based tasks. If there isn't enough mobility when moving the arm overhead it can cause the force to go through muscles that aren't typically meant for those movements. Increasing mobility in this area allows for more range of motion to perform these tasks in awkward positions. With increased mobility, we need increased stability, too. And we can do so by strengthening! Strengthening the muscles in the shoulder allows us to perform these tasks for a sustained period of time before fatigue sets in.

Strengthening the muscles around the shoulder not only provides stability but increases neuromuscular control. This allows you to be able to control your muscles and joints as you move through different ranges of motion. Combining stability and mobility into your preventative care can significantly reduce your risk of sustaining sprains and strain injuries both on and off the job.



Check out [these core shoulder](#) key prevention exercises to work into your day.

### GETTING A GOOD GRIP

When we're at work, we spend a lot of time gripping using the flexor muscles of our hands and forearms. We grip tools and equipment. We use them to maintain control of power tools. We pull, push, or lift equipment or products. This repetitiveness of tasks and motion can lead to an over activation and overdevelopment of the flexor muscles and a stretching or underdevelopment of our extensor muscles. This can lead to pain and soreness in the hands and forearm. It can also lead to chronic issues like tennis and golfer's elbow.

Implementing eccentric and isometric exercises into your daily routine can help counteract the stress we place on our hands, wrists, and forearms while working and prevent an injury.



[Here](#) are Sam's recommended eccentric and isometric exercises for you to try!

**Sam Grimm, MAT, ATC, LAT** || Originally from Santa Barbara, California, Sam attended the University of Oregon to obtain his Bachelor's degree in Human Physiology with an emphasis on Neurophysiology. While there, he played collegiate rugby which opened his eyes to the field of Athletic Training. He moved to Texas to continue his education at Baylor University and received his Master's of Athletic Training degree. While not at work, you can find Sam at the gym, hiking a mountain, fishing a nearby river or shredding down the slopes.



**Work Right NW** is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

