

MUSCLE TONERS

Item # 7165 BLU

Muscle Toners are great for developing arm, shoulder, hip and leg strength. They can be used individually or with a partner. Students with low muscle tone benefit greatly from using muscle toners.

Arms, Shoulders and Chest Exercises:

Shoulder strength directly affects small motor development. Writing skills and small motor tasks like buttoning a shirt or snapping jeans rely on shoulder strength. Here are some exercises for strengthening the shoulders:



- “Butterfly wings”: Individually, ask the student to hold each end of the Muscle Toner directly in front of their chest with extended arms. Ask them to pull the Muscle Toner out, bending the elbows to the side at chest level, creating “butterfly wings.” Allow the student to do as many repetitions of butterfly wings as they can do. Avoid specifying numbers of repetitions. Use the student’s first number of repetitions as a baseline number for self-improvement each time they attempt the drill.
- “Advanced butterfly wings”: Once the student has been successful at the basic butterfly wing drill, increase difficulty by asking the student to “make their wings” and then, squeeze their shoulder blades together. Students who do not have a strong understanding of their body parts may have to be manipulated into position until they gain kinesthetic awareness to perform it on their own. Students can be asked to compress a soft ball or sponge between their shoulder blades in order that they understand the movement.
- “Archer Stretch” as shown in the picture above is also a great strengthening drill. It can be made into a game by “sling-shotting” small stuffed toys through a hoop or at other targets. This addresses spatial awareness as well as strengthening the arms, chest and shoulders.

For other shoulder and upper body strengthening drills, hook the Muscle Toner onto a bar or other solid piece of equipment, and have the student:

- Pull the Muscle Toner downward to their hip in front of them with straight arms.
- Pull the Muscle Toner downward to their hip in a flanked position with straight arms.

- Curl with the Muscle Toner.

Hip and Leg Strengthening:

Hook the Muscle Toner to a low surface.

- Ask the student to use their foot to do leg lifts forward, backward and laterally, using their foot.
- Ask the student to lay on their stomach and bend their knee, pulling the Muscle Toner with their foot.

Partner Game:

- Play Tug-o-war with the Muscle Toner.

***Beth Gardiner** brings an impressive array of experience and professional affiliations in the gymnastics world, spanning three decades. As owner of Heart of Texas Gymnastics Beth specializes in preschool gymnastics, recreational, compulsory team and special needs gymnastics. Her child-first philosophy and skill-based curriculum have proven effective in building dynamic and highly successful gymnastics programs. Through these, and as a volunteer with Special Olympics and other private organizations, she regularly works with children and adults who have disabilities, researching ways to serve the special needs population in the gym environment. Beth has also served as a USA Gymnastics National Instructor since 1997 and is a 1983 graduate of Texas A&M University.*