

## ANTERIOR SHOULDER: MODIFIED FOR RESTRICTED MOTION

If your shoulder is very restricted from injury, scar tissue, chronic posture, or lack of use, the previous shoulder stretch will be too aggressive for you and you should start with this modification.

- ❖ Start by getting a bath towel and rolling it up. It should be the length of your spine and about 3-4 inches thick.
- ❖ Sit yourself on the floor and put the towel behind you where your spine will be when you lay down.
- ❖ Then lay down on the towel roll with your arms down by your sides. The towel roll will lift your spine and torso off the floor enough so your shoulder blades can fall backwards to the floor opening up the front of your chest.
- ❖ Next slide your arm(s) upward along the floor using it as a support. Stop anywhere you feel a pull and hold the stretch until it loosens or 45-90 seconds. Keep moving up until you are at around 135°.
- ❖ Relax and enjoy this process. This position gives the front of your shoulders a break from our normal posture so hang out for 5 or more minutes to really give the anterior shoulder a great release.

Once this gets easier or if you want to target the fascia of the anterior shoulder you can use your hand to anchor just below your axilla (armpit). If you hold the tissue so it is stable and then do the above stretch you will notice it intensifies the feeling of stretch.

\*As with all stretches you only want to take a stretch until you feel a slight pull but no pain or tenderness. If you over-stretch either pushing it too far or too many times you can weaken or hurt the muscle. You want to hold the stretch long enough to be effective: 45-90 seconds is a good rule of thumb but some muscles have better results with a stretch longer than 90 seconds. If you stretch less than 90 seconds the muscle will elastically recoil especially if it is under 30 seconds. It is better to do 1 long stretch than multiples of a shorter stretch. As you hold the stretch you should feel it give and feel looser, as this happens you can take up the slack a bit and continue to hold til the 90 seconds. Don't forget to BREATHE! Nice slow abdominal breathing will help the muscles release faster. If the stretch suddenly becomes uncomfortable or increases your symptoms then stop the stretches immediately and talk with your RMT.