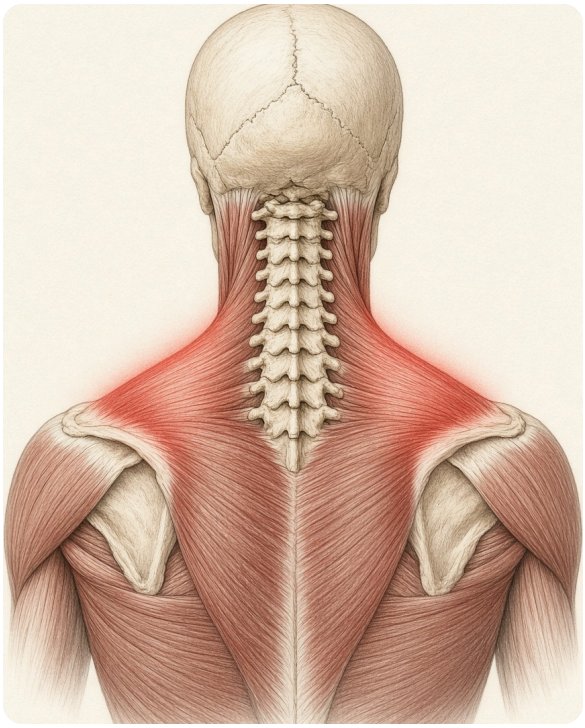
ARMIN PHYSIO



PATIENT GUIDE

Upper Trap Pain

Pain on top of your shoulders and neck? It could be your **upper traps.**

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What are the upper traps?

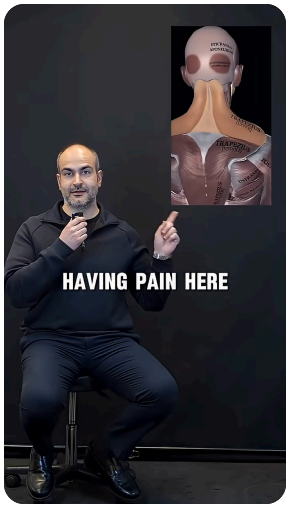
Your upper trapezius runs from the base of your skull and neck to the top of your shoulder. It's responsible for shoulder elevation, helps upwardly rotate your shoulder, and extends and side-bends your neck. When it's overworked or sore, those movements can hurt.

QUICK CHECK

Does this sound like you?

- ☐ **Pain on top of your shoulder**, between the neck and shoulder
- ☐ Does it hurt when you **elevate your shoulder**?
- ☐ Pain when you **bring up your arms**
- ☐ Pain when you **bend your neck backwards** against resistance
- ☐ Trouble **side-bending your neck**

If you ticked a few boxes, your upper traps could be the problem. Try the 3 exercises on the next pages.



Pain on top of the shoulder



Pain when you bring up your arms

YOUR 3 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Shoulder shrugs

Strengthens the upper traps through shoulder elevation



1. Hold a weight (like a kettlebell) on the sore side, arm straight by your side.
2. **Shrug your shoulders up** towards your ears.
3. **Hold 2–3 seconds** at the top.
4. Lower slowly and repeat.

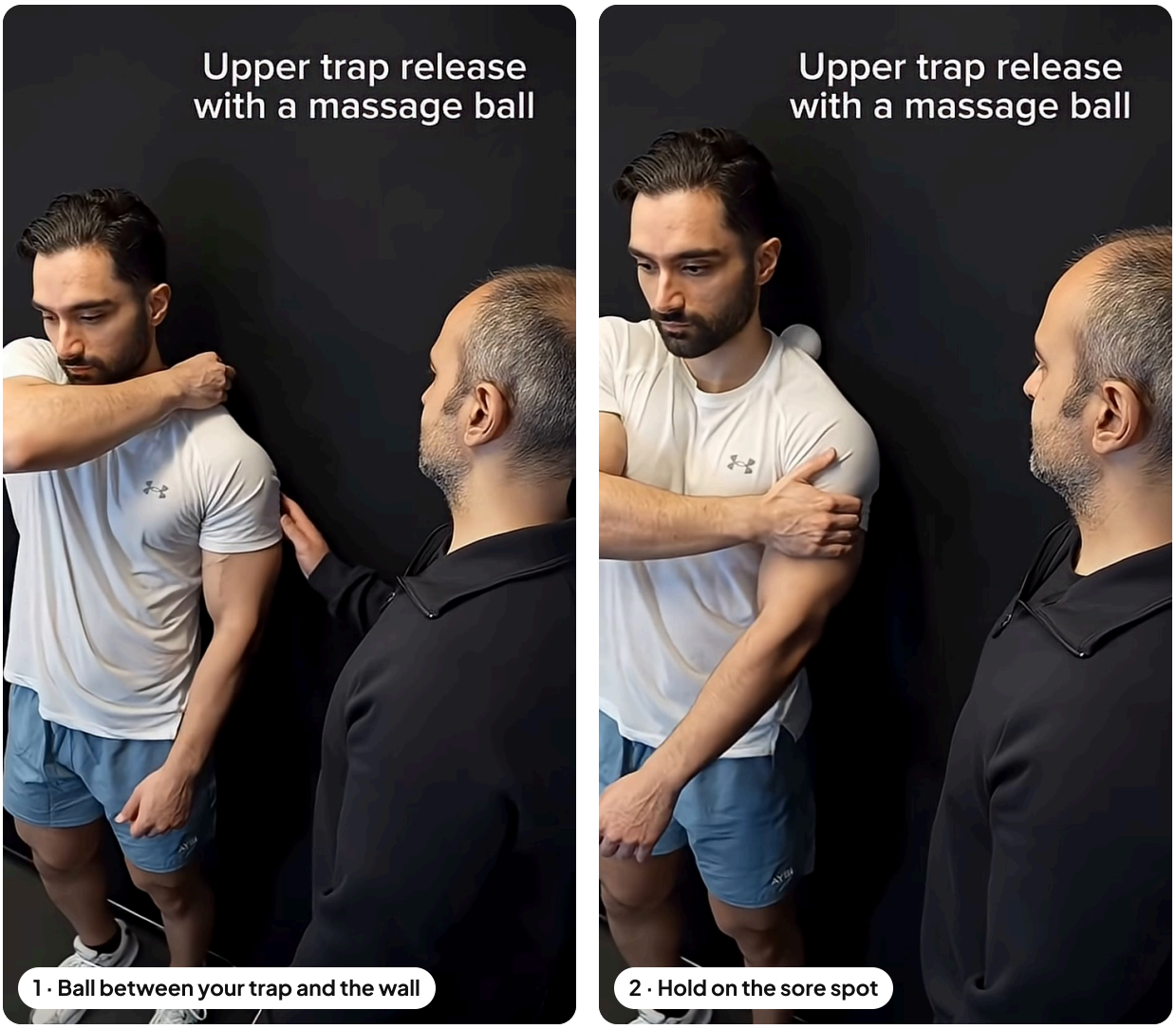
3 sets of 15, hold 2–3 seconds

From Armin's video description

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

2 Upper trap release with a massage ball

Eases a sore, tight spot in the trap



1. Place a **massage ball between your upper trap and the wall**.
2. **Find the sore spot** on your traps.
3. **Hold for 1–2 minutes**, gradually increasing the pressure.

Hold 1–2 minutes per sore spot

From Armin's video description

Stop if it causes sharp pain, or numbness or tingling down your arm.

3 Neck side-bend stretch

Stretches the upper trap



1. **Sit on your hand** (or pull on something) to bring the shoulder blade down.
2. **Side-bend your neck away** from that side. This increases the stretch.
3. You can use your other hand to gently add to the stretch.
4. **Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute.**

Hold 30 seconds to 1 minute

From Armin's video description

Stop if you get pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm, dizziness, or pain that keeps building.

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Strengthen
Shoulder shrugs, 3 × 15, 2–3 s hold

02
Release
Massage ball on the trap, 1–2 minutes

03
Stretch
Neck side-bend stretch, 30–60 s

Sets, reps and hold times are from Armin's video description; doing it once a day is a suggestion. The video shows these with on-screen labels rather than spoken steps, so the step wording is based on his description.

Stop the exercise if you notice

- Pain, numbness or tingling spreading down your arm
- Dizziness, or pain that keeps building as you go
- Pain that lingers or is worse the next day

If an exercise keeps causing these, stop it and get assessed.

SAFETY FIRST

Get checked right away if you have

- Neck pain after a **car accident, fall or hit to the head**, especially with **severe pain** or not being able to move your neck
- A **sudden, severe or unusual headache** ("the worst headache of your life")
- **Dizziness, double vision, trouble speaking or swallowing**, drooping of the face, or fainting
- **Numbness, tingling or weakness** in your arms or hands that is **getting worse**, or in **both arms**
- **Clumsy hands, trouble walking or poor balance**, or new **bladder or bowel** changes
- A **stiff neck with a fever**, constant pain at night, or **unexplained weight loss**

Call 911 for a sudden severe headache, trouble speaking, face drooping or weakness on one side. For the others, see a doctor right away or go to the nearest emergency department. If your neck isn't improving after a few weeks, **book an assessment**.

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NEED MORE HELP?

Book an assessment with Armin

In clinic or virtually. See current options and times at the link.

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Disclaimer: This handout is for education only. It is not a diagnosis or medical advice and does not replace an assessment by a qualified health professional. If you're unsure whether these exercises are right for you, check with your physiotherapist or doctor first.

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