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# Upper Cross Syndrome - Reversing Pain

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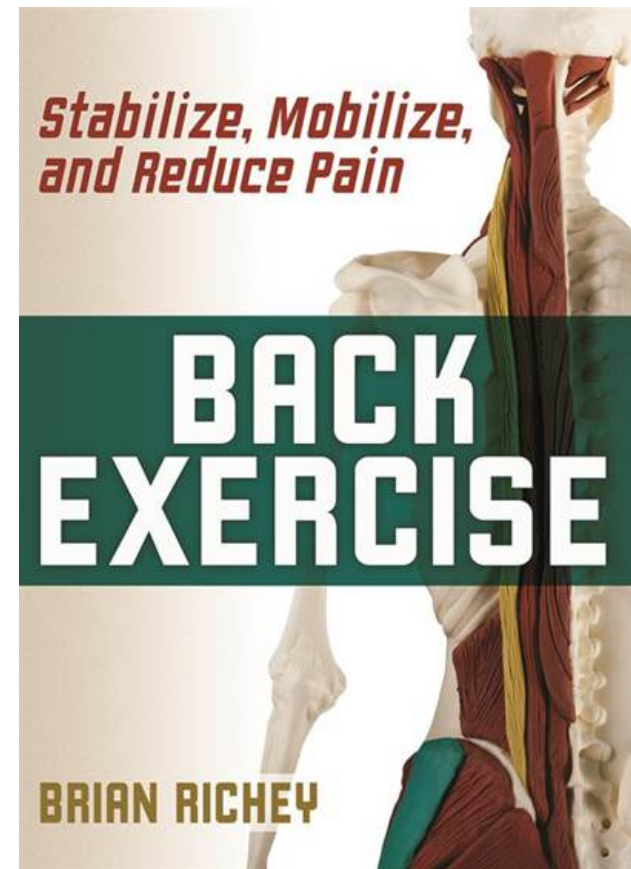
**Brian Richey B.S. MES**

Balanced Body Faculty

## Back Exercise: Stabilize, Mobilize and Reduce Pain

By Brian Richey

My new book is for anyone who has or has a client dealing with low back pain. It goes into depth on specific spinal pathologies as well as non-specific low back pain, explaining each pathology, highlighting the contraindications and prescribing specific exercise programming to train and progress them safely.



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# Expectations

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- » Today we are talking about **Corrective Exercise** not Medical Exercise.
- » If your client has a medical/spinal condition please talk to their physician before attempting any exercise.
- » We will be dealing with muscular and postural imbalances.
- » **These strategies are not designed to diagnose or treat any medical condition.**

# Vladimir Janda

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- » Clinician
- » Researcher
- » Educator
- » “Father of Rehabilitation”
- » “Discovered” Upper and Lower Cross Syndromes
- » Looking to create a systematic approach to rehabilitation

# Upper Crossed Syndrome

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- » Weak and Inhibited
  - » Deep Cervical Flexors
  - » Lower Traps, Serratus Anterior, Rhomboids
- » Tight and Shortened
  - » Pectoralis Major, Minor, SCM
  - » Upper Traps, Levator Scapula, Occipitals

## Average Range of Motion

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	A-O joint Occiput-C1	A-A joint C1 – C2	Entire Cervical
Flexion	20		65
Extension	10		40
Lateral flexion	5		35
Rotation		35	50

# Muscles of the Spine

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## Muscles of the Posterior Spine

- Erector spinae
  - Semispinalis capitis
  - Splenius
    - Capitis
    - Cervicis
  - Spinalis
  - Longissimus
  - Iliocostalis

# Superficial Muscles of the Spine and Shoulder Girdle

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## Muscles of the Shoulder Girdle

- Latissimus dorsi
- Trapezius
- Levator scapulae
- Rhomboid major and minor



## Joints Affected

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- » Cervical
- » Scapulo–Thoracic
- » AC Joint
- » Thoracic/Ribs
- » Down the arm

# Postural Changes

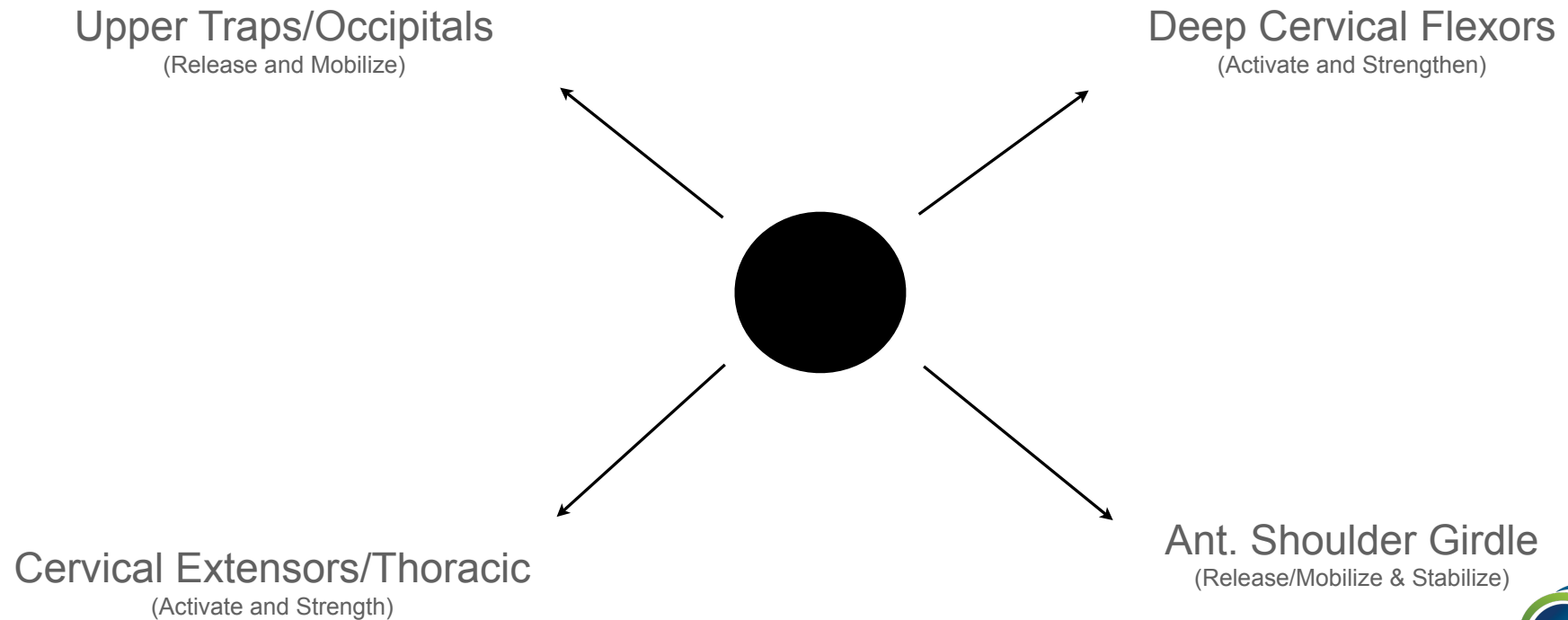
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- » Forward Head
- » Rounded Shoulders
- » Winged Scapula
- » Increased Thoracic Kyphosis
- » Internal Rotation of Humerus
- » Secondary Changes; Increased lumbar lordosis, Ant Pelvic Tilt, Hyper-extended Knees, etc.

- 
- » Forward Head Posture
  - » Rounded Shoulders
  - » Headaches (Occipital)
  - » Winged Scapula
  - » Nerve Pn down arm  
(elbow and wrist Pn)
  - » TMJ
  - » Upper Trap Pn

# Strategies for Upper Crossed Syndrome

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# Assess

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- Visual:
  - Forward Head Posture
  - Hyper-lordotic Cervical Spine
  - Hyper-Kyphosis
  - Rounded Shoulders
  - Hands facing posterior
  - Winged/Splayed Scapula



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# Assessments

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- Movement:
  - Against the wall; Head can't touch wall without arching.
  - Against the wall–thumbs touch wall overhead (or Supine); Ribs flare or move as one, lumbar has to arch.  
**OR**
  - Toes and Nose against wall, arms overhead, lift arms away from wall.
  - Against the wall (or supine); Arms in goal post position, can they externally rotate and touch the wall with their hands.
  - Chin to opposite shoulder (hands behind their back); do they have restricted ROM?

# Head Against Wall

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- Look to see if head can touch the wall without leaning back
- Shoulder Flexion overhead, can they touch their thumbs to the wall without arching lumbar or flaring ribs

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- Arms in goal post position.
  - Perform Ext. Rot.
  - Can their hand touch the wall without body compensations



## Toes and Nose

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- Facing the wall, toes and nose touching the wall.
- With arms overhead, palms on wall, can they pull their hands away from the wall without rotating torso

## Chin to Opposite Shoulder

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- With hand behind their back, have them turn their head to the (right) and then try to touch their chin to their chest.
- You are looking to see any restricted ROM and symmetry. Its ok if they don't go all the way down.

## Release

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- Pec Minor:
  - Against a wall, using a small ball, massage your way from your sternum toward your AC joint. Focus on moving toward shoulder, not toward your Sternum
- Upper Traps
  - Using the small ball in the door jam.
  - Bend over 90 degrees (approx) and massage your traps
- Occipitals
  - Take 2 lacrosse balls or tennis balls and tape them together (or purchase a Still Point Inducer)
  - Lay down with them under your occipitals, perform small chin tucks to massage area
- Serratus Anterior
  - Using a foam roll, laying on your side, place the FR at the point where the edge of your scapula meets your ribs. Slightly roll forward.

## Mobilize and Stretch

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- Pecs:
  - Doorway or Corner Stretch
- Seated Neck Stretches
  - Chin to chest, hands on crown of head. Try to touch your elbows together in front of your face.
  - Ear to Shoulder. Think about pulling away not driving down.
  - Chin to opposite Shoulder. Think about pulling away not driving down.

# Pec Doorway/Corner Stretch

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# Cervical Stretches

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# Scalene Stretch

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## Strengthen and Stabilize

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- » Deep Cervical Flexors & Rotators
  - » Neck Statue Work
  - » Togu Ball Retraction
  - » Togu Ball Chin Tuck (Head nods)
  - » Togu Ball Rotations
  - » (Advanced) Head 1 inch lift
  - » Prone Head Retraction



## Cervical Statue

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- Seated, with partner standing behind
- Tell client “Don’t let me move you”
- Gently (less than 1 lb.) apply quick pressure to all sides of head
- Focus on quickness not on increasing pressure

# Togu Ball Work

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# 1 Inch Head Lift

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- Lying supine, neck in neutral position
- Lift head 1 inch off ground/pillow
- Not more than an inch or two **max**

# Prone Head Retraction

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# Scapular Work

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- Prone Scapular Retraction
- Resistance Band Retraction
- Toes and Nose
- Superman Arms

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- In a plank (floor/table)
  - Allow the chest to fall, then using your serratus press your elbows into the ground.
  - Do not over-protract your shoulders

## Prone Scapular Retraction Holds

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- Lying prone, hands by sides  
forehead supported
- Initiate with a squeeze between  
scapulas “Open your  
collarbones”
- Lift arms, focus is on squeezing  
not lifting, I don’t care how high  
they lift their arms

## Band Retraction w/ Pulses

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- With band secured around an object or knees
- Focus on retracting scapulas and not how far the arms go back



## Toes and Nose

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- Against a wall, arms overhead
- Pull one arm back at a time without rotating torso.
- Perform both unilateral and bilaterally

## Superman (Upper Body Only)

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- Lying prone, forehead supported
- Arms outstretch into a Y
- Lift arms. This can be done unilaterally or bilaterally

## References

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- Janda Compendium #1&2
- Assessment and Treatment of Muscle Imbalances–The Janda Approach
- [www.jandaapproach.com](http://www.jandaapproach.com)



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# Post-Rehab Workshops in your Studio

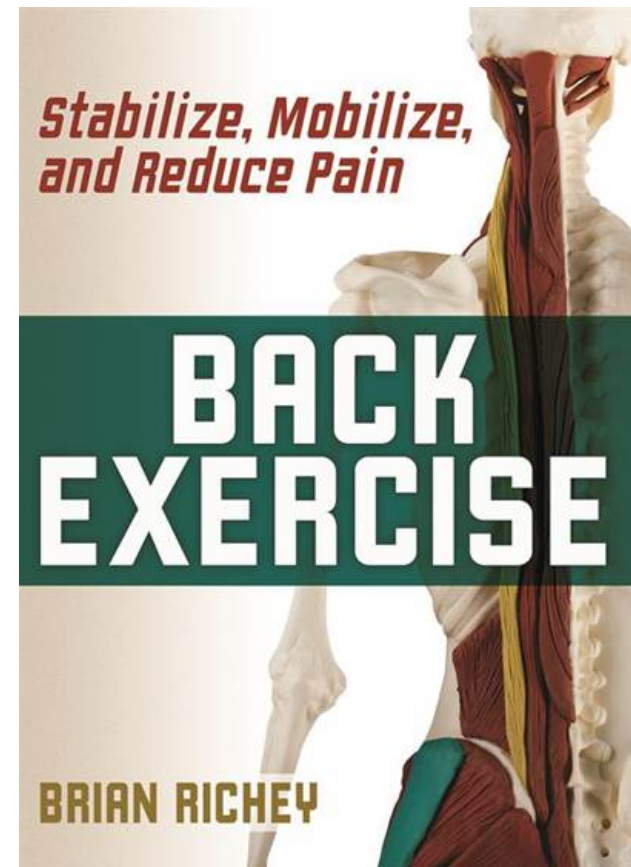
If you are interested in hosting an  
Post-Rehab/Medical Exercise  
Workshops in your facility please  
contact Brian at:

Brian Richey at [brian@fit4lifeDC.com](mailto:brian@fit4lifeDC.com)

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# Mahalo!

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