

Latissimus Dorsi Corrective Actions:

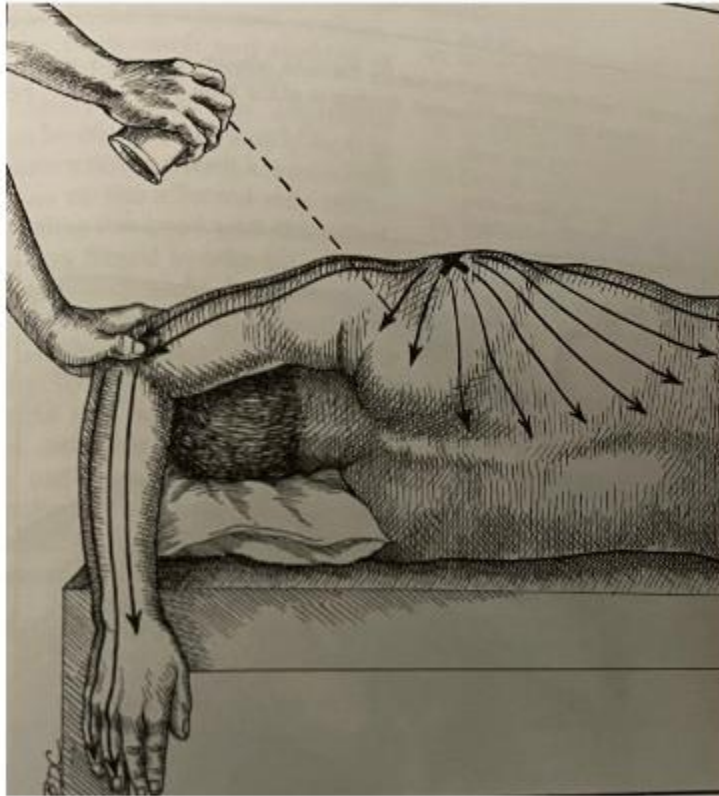


Figure 24.5. Sidelying stretch position, the most common location of trigger points (X), and vapocoolant spray pattern (arrows) for the latissimus dorsi muscle.

Postisometric relaxation can release this muscle effectively by having the patient inhale and press the humerus lightly against the operator's hand, then exhale slowly and relax the muscle. For lengthening the more horizontal fibers of the muscle, the patient's arm is placed anteriorly across the chest; again, postisometric relaxation can be effective.

Home exercises to passively stretch the muscle include the Mouth Wrap-around Test (see Fig. 18.2) and the upper hand position of the In-doorway Stretch Exercise (see Fig. 42.9C). To effectively stretch the latissimus dorsi while doing the latter exercise, the low back must be arched (hyperextended) and the hips swung forward through the doorway; the patient should feel the tension in the latissimus dorsi muscle. As tension in the muscle releases with slow exhalation, the patient slides the hands a little higher in successive steps. Each stretch maneuver should be done smoothly, without jerking the muscle for a few repetitions daily until relief is ob-

tained. The effectiveness of the exercise is increased by following it with moist heat, applied for 15-20 minutes, especially before retiring.



Figure 18.2. Screening test (Mouth Wrap-around Test) of abduction and lateral rotation of the arm. The fully rendered hand shows restricted range of motion. The dotted white arrow and dotted outline show the additional reach that would have been normal for this particular subject who had congenitally short upper arms. Most persons can normally cover half the mouth; individuals with hypermobile joints normally cover the entire mouth with the hand.

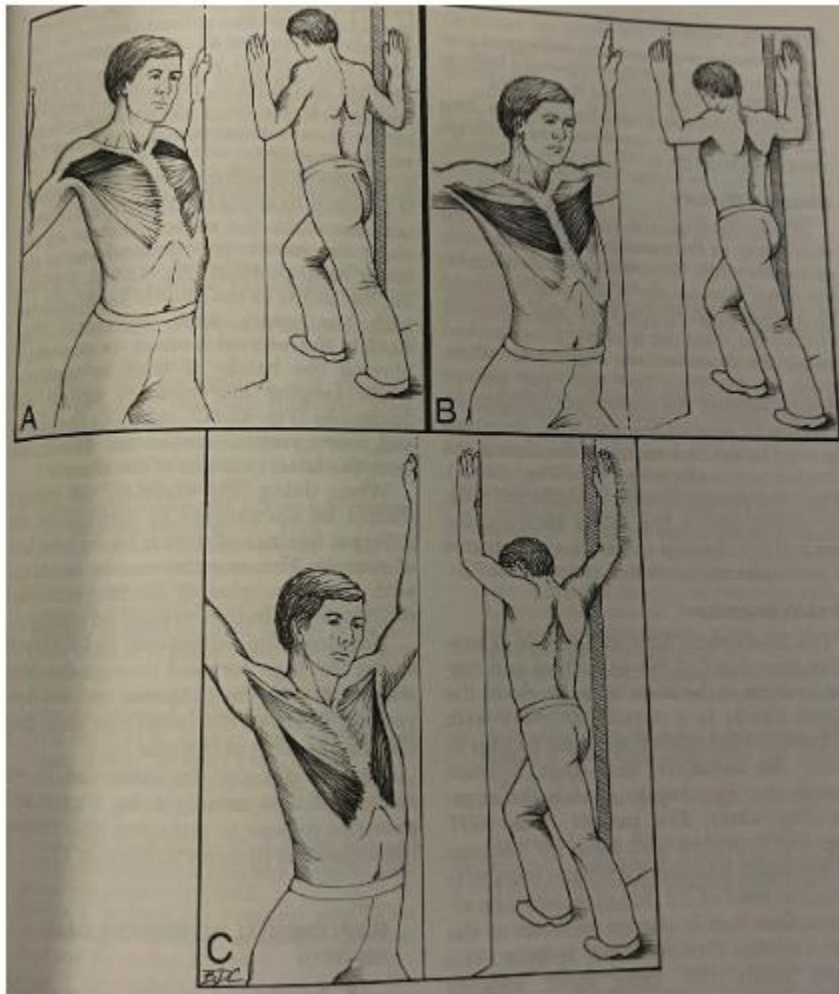


Figure 42.9. Effect of the In-doorway Stretch Exercise on the pectoralis major muscle. A, lower hand-position to stretch the clavicular section bilaterally. B, middle hand-position to stretch the sternal section bilaterally. C, upper hand-position to stretch the fibers of the costal and abdominal sections. See text for details.

Effective self-treatment for latissimus dorsi TrPs can be obtained by applying trigger point pressure release with a tennis ball. The patient lies on the affected side with a pillow supporting the head and shoulders, and with the arm flexed to take up slack in the latissimus dorsi muscle. Body position is adjusted over the tennis ball to locate TrP tenderness. Gentle nonpainful pressure is applied to the TrP while the patient alternately contracts and relaxes the latissimus dorsi muscle, exhaling during each relaxation phase, until tenderness in that TrP fades. The patient then

readjusts position on the tennis ball to find another TrP and repeats the pressure-release procedure.