

**American College of Physicians - Internal Medicine Meeting 2026
San Francisco, CA**

Diagnosis-Driven Physical Examination of the Shoulder

Faculty Information

Director:

Anna Quan, MD

Anna Buehler, MD, Member

Alan Z. Grusky, MD

Michal "Kalli" Hose, MD

Carlin Senter, MD, FACP

Gregory Summerville, MD, FACP

Dylan D. Walker, MD, Resident/Fellow Member

Posted Date: March 10, 2026

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Diagnosis-Driven Physical Examination of the Shoulder

ACP Musculoskeletal Medicine Teaching Group

ACP National Conference



ACP Shoulder Exam Clinical Skills Workshop Faculty



Anna Buehler, MD
UC San Diego



Alan Grusky, MD
UC San Francisco Sports
Medicine Fellow



Michal "Kalli" Hose, MD
UC San Diego



Carlin Senter, MD
UC San Francisco



Greg Summerville, MD
University of North Carolina
– Chapel Hill



Anna Quan, MD
UC San Diego



Dylan Walker MD,
San Antonio Uniformed
Services Health Education
Consortium,
ACP Waxman Scholar



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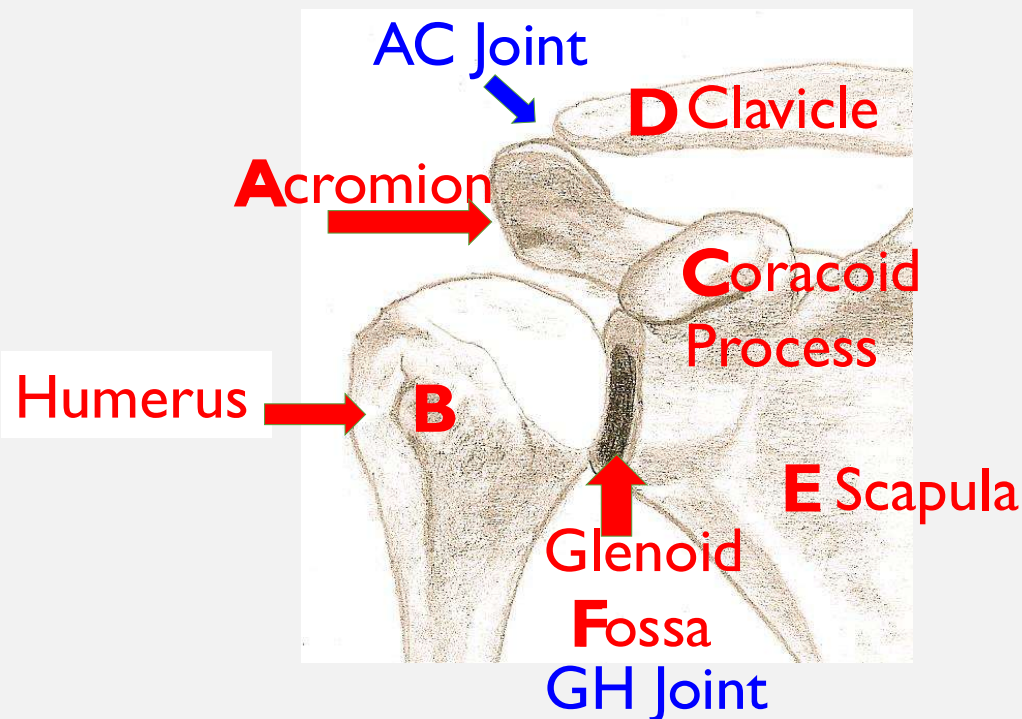
OBJECTIVES

1. **Inspect/Observe** pertinent shoulder anatomy
2. **Palpate** key anatomical shoulder landmarks (ABC's)
3. Organize Rotator Cuff **Range of Motion/Strength** (SITS)
4. Organize Shoulder **Provocative Tests** (BIAS)
5. **Practice** shoulder exam and cases in small groups

PRIMARY CARE SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection
- Palpation: **ABC'S**
- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**
- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

SHOULDER: BONES & JOINTS



PRIMARY CARE SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection

- Palpation: **ABC'S**

- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**

- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

OBSERVATION: BONY DEFORMITIES
PRIOR FRACTURE



OBSERVATION: BONY DEFORMITIES
AC JOINT SEPARATION



OBSERVATION: MUSCLES
BICEPS RUPTURE

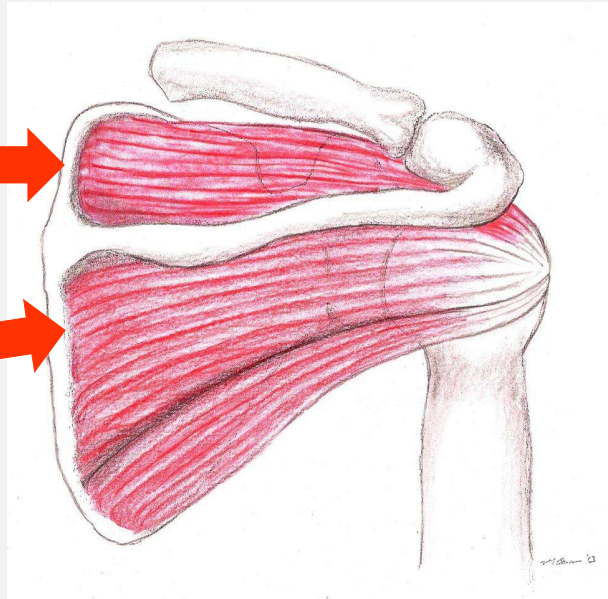


POSTERIOR ROTATOR CUFF MUSCLES

Supraspinatus



Infraspinatus



OBSERVATION: MUSCLES ROTATOR CUFF ATROPHY



SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection

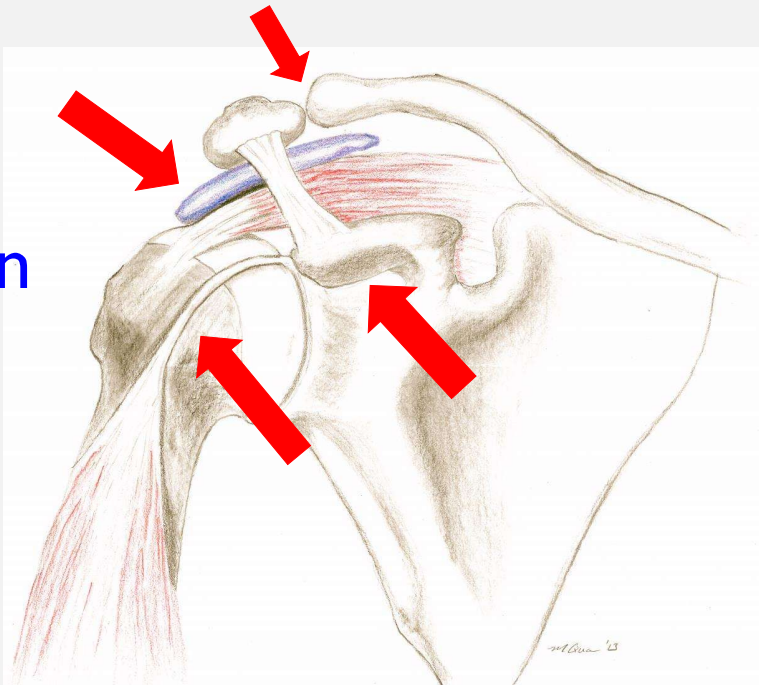
- Palpation: **ABC'S**

- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**

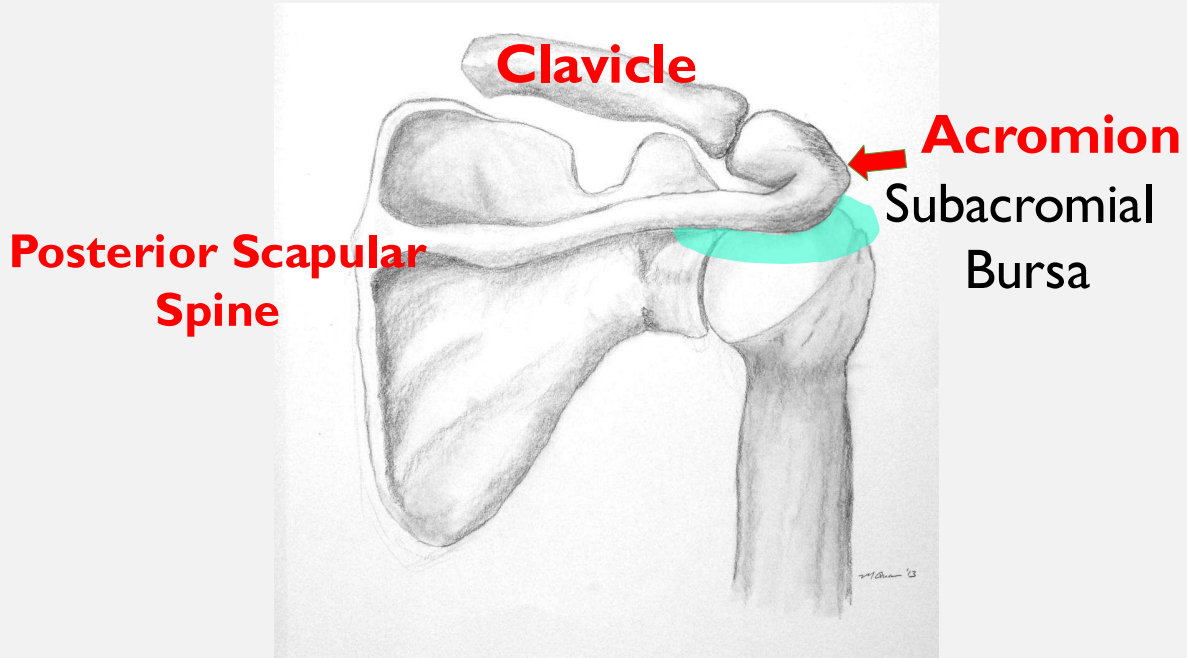
- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

PALPATION: **ABCS**

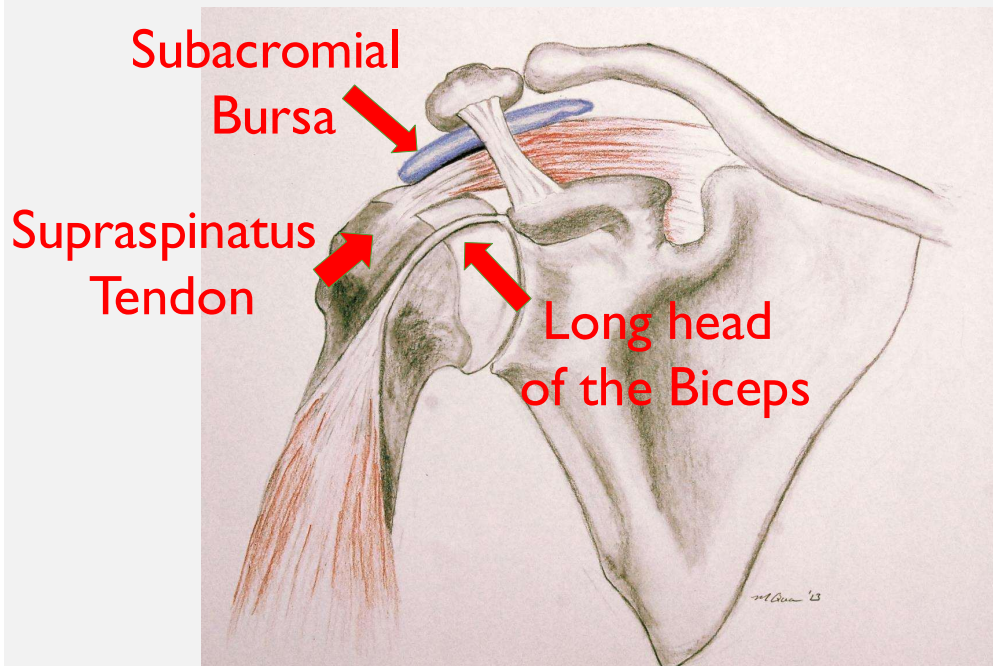
- **A**C joint
- **B**iceps Tendon
- **C**oracoid
- **S**ubacromial
Space



SHOULDER BONES: POSTERIOR BONES



SUBACROMIAL SPACE: CONTENTS



PALPATION: **ABCS**

- **A**C joint ➤ AC joint oa/separation
- **B**iceps Tendon ➤ LH Biceps Tendonitis
- **C**oracoid ➤ Frozen Shoulder
- **S**ubacromial Space ➤ SA Impingement

5

SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection
- Palpation: **ABC's**
- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**
- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

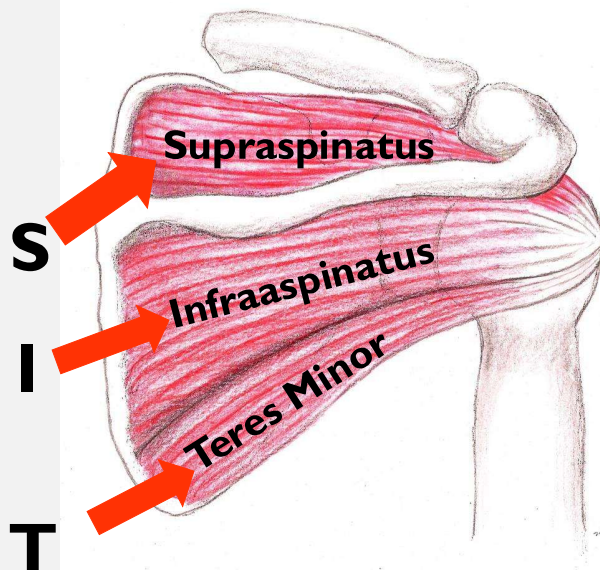
SHOULDER QUIZ 2: ROTATOR CUFF

Name 4 Rotator cuff muscles
and their actions:

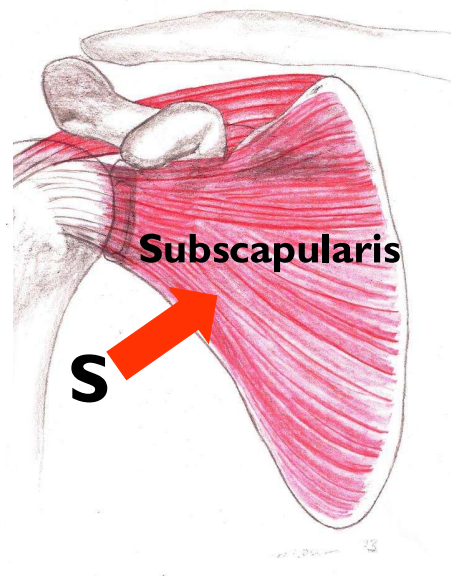
- **S** upraspinatus
- **I** nfraspinatus
- **T** eres Minor
- **S** ubscapularis

ROTATOR CUFF MUSCLES: SITS

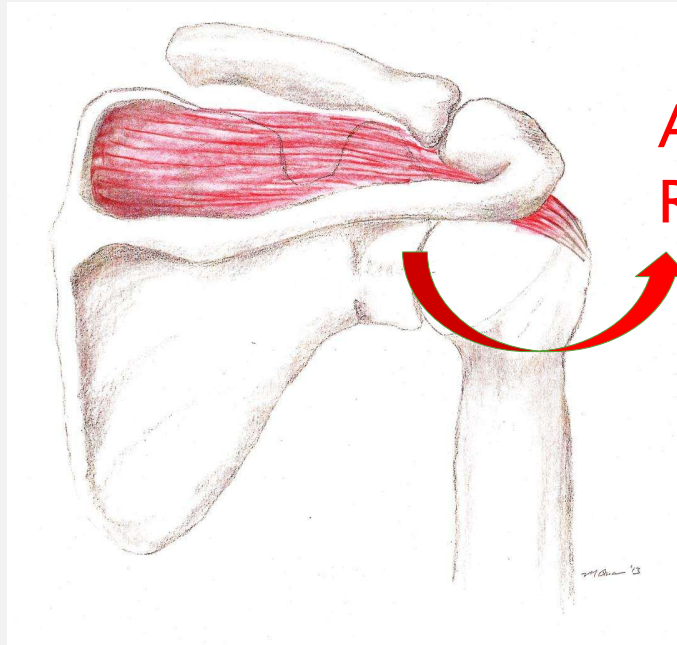
Posterior



Anterior

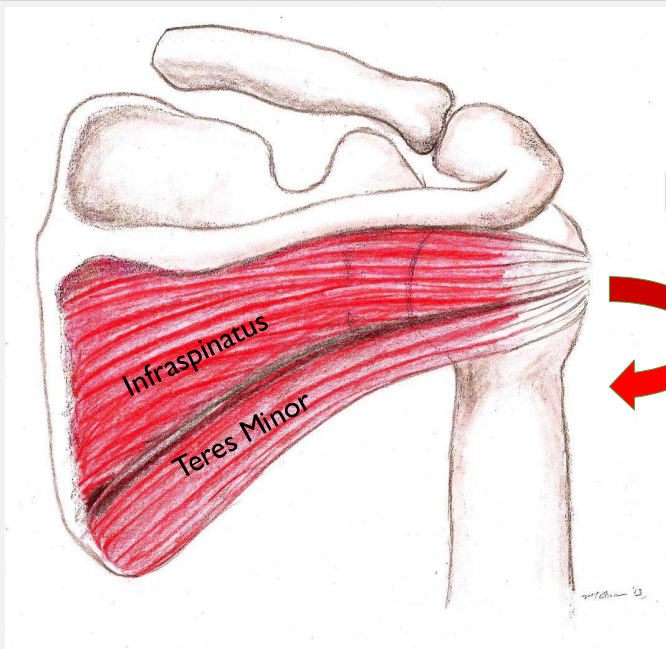


ROTATOR CUFF SITS:
SUPRASPINATUS



Abduction
Rom: 0-180

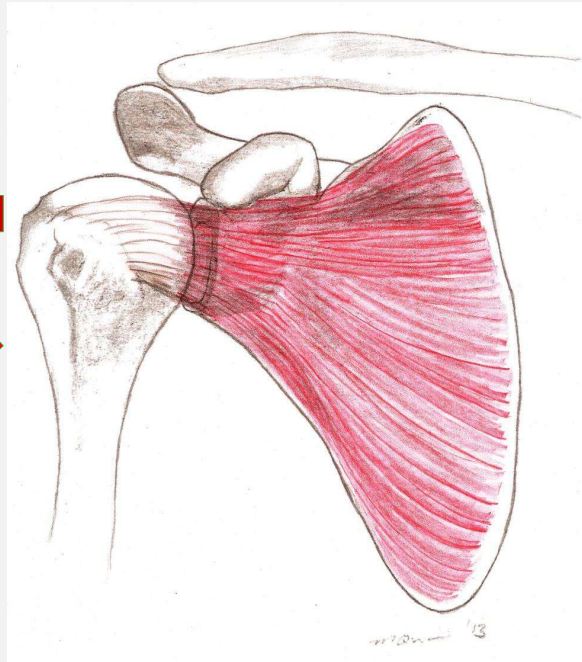
ROTATOR CUFF SITS:
INFRASPINATUS/TERES MINOR



External Rotation
ROM: 0-90

ROTATOR CUFF SITS: SUBSCAPULARIS

Internal Rotation
ROM: spinoous
level



SHOULDER EXAM TIP: ROM/STRENGTH BY SITS

SITS ROM	Full Tear Test	Strength Test:
SITS: Abd	Drop Arm	Empty Can
SITS: ER	ER Lag	Resisted ER
SITS IR	IR Lag	Lift Off/ Belly Press

SITS

Muscle:

➤ **Supraspinatus**

Motion:

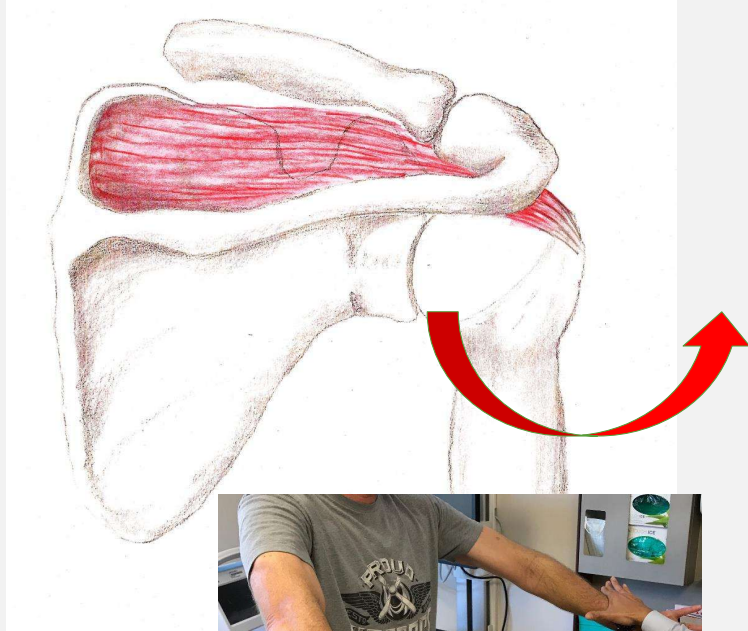
➤ **Abduction**

Full tear test:

➤ **Drop Arm**

Strength test:

➤ **Empty Can**



SITS

Muscle:

➤ **Infraspinatus/TM**

Motion:

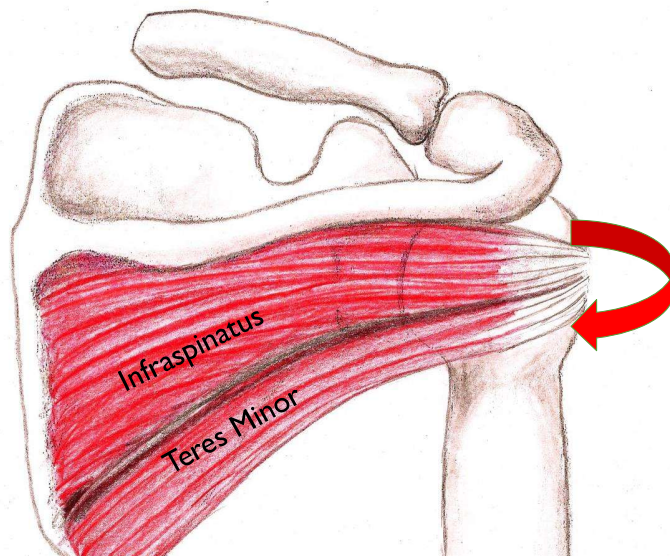
➤ **Ext Rotation**

Full tear test:

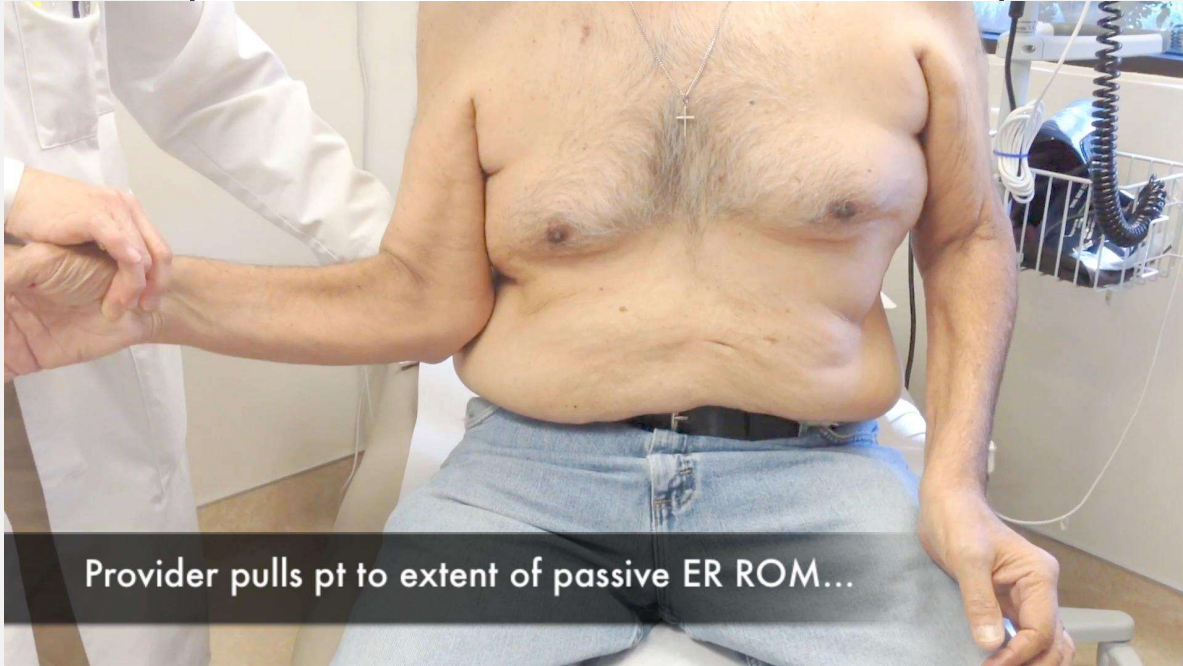
➤ **ER Lag**

Strength test:

➤ **Resisted ER**



IS/TM FULL TEAR TEST: EXT ROTATION LAG



Provider pulls pt to extent of passive ER ROM...

SITS

Muscle:

- **Subscapularis**

Motion:

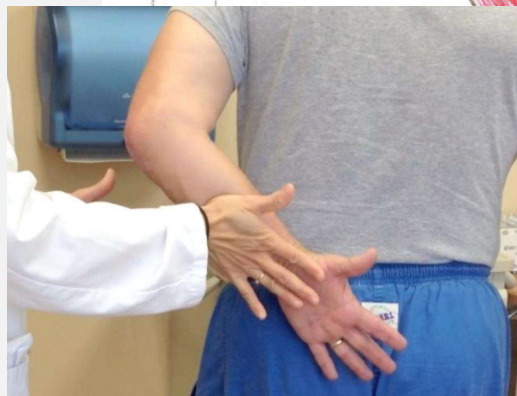
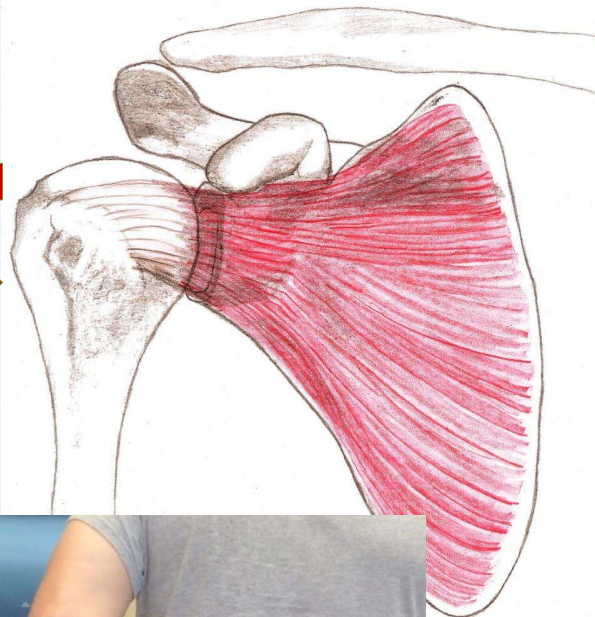
- **Int Rotation**

Full tear test:

- **IR Lag**

Strength test:

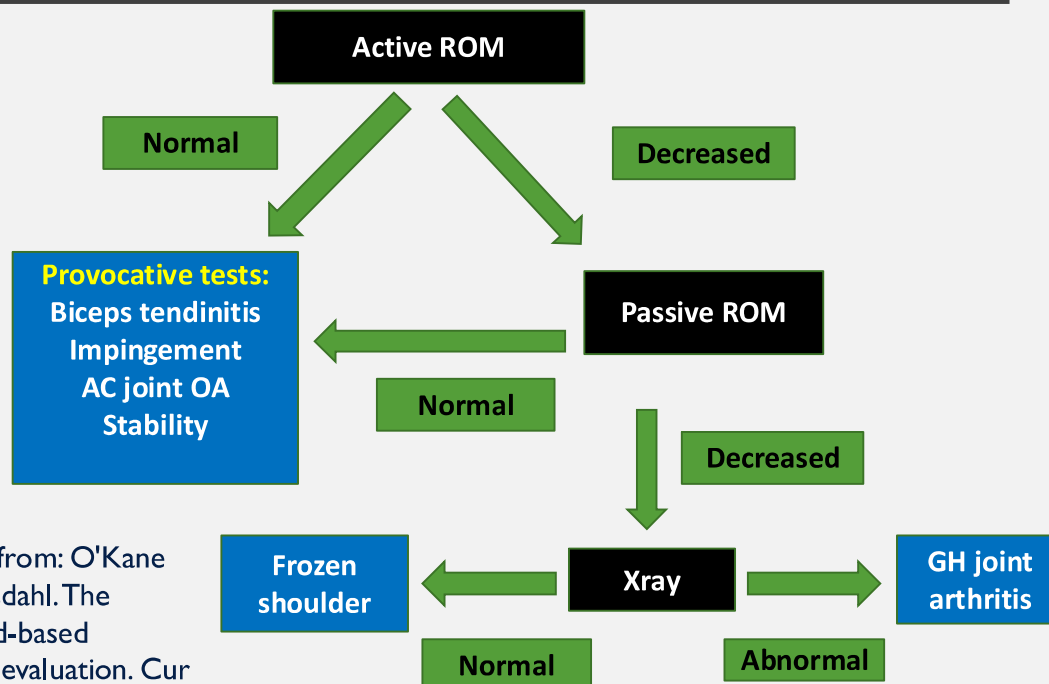
- **Gerber Lift off**
- **Belly Press**



SHOULDER EXAM: ROM/STRENGTH SITS

- **Supraspinatus**
 - ROM: Abduction Active/Passive (if limited)
 - Strength: Empty Can
 - Full tear test: Drop Arm
- **Infraspinatus/Teres Minor**
 - ROM: External Rotation Active/Passive (if limited)
 - Strength: ER Strength
 - Full tear test: ER Lag test
- **Subscapularis**
 - ROM: Internal Rotation Spinous process level Active/Passive (if limited)
 - Strength: Gerber lift off
 - Full tear test: IR Lag

SHOULDER: RANGE OF MOTION IS KEY



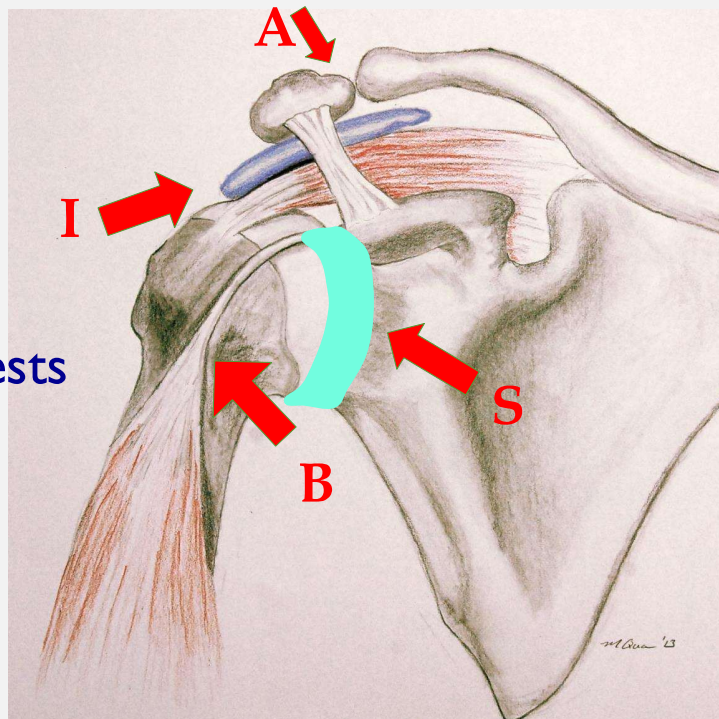
Adapted from: O'Kane and Toresdahl. The evidenced-based shoulder evaluation. Cur Sports Med Rep. 2014.

SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection
- Palpation: **ABC's**
- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**
- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

SHOULDER PROVOCATIVE SIGNS: **BIAS**

- **Biceps Tests**
- **Impingement Tests**
- **Acromioclavicular Tests**
- **Stability Tests**



SHOULDER EXAM: PROVOCATIVE SIGNS: **BIAS**

- **Biceps tests**

- Yergason's
- Speed's

- **Impingement Tests:**

- Neer's
- Hawkin's

- **Acromioclavicular tests**

- Scarf test
- Cross arm

- **Stability Tests:**

- Apprehension
- Relocation
- Load & Shift
- Sulcus
- O'Briens

BIAS: BICEPS TESTS

Yergason's Test

- Resisted
SUPINATION



Speed's Test

- Resisted Biceps
FLEXION



BIAS: IMPINGEMENT

Neer's Test

- Elbow extended
- Internally rotated
- Forward flexion,



Hawkin's Test

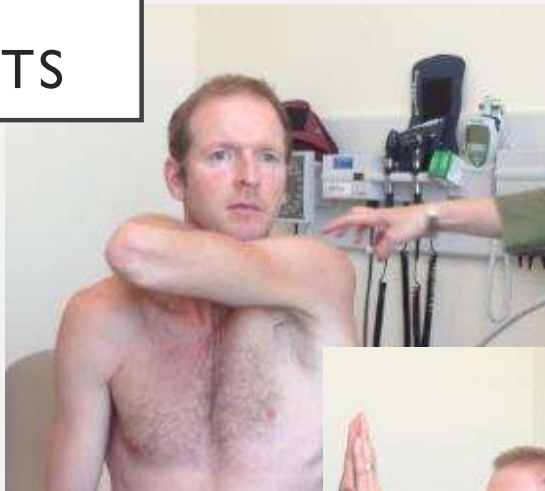
- 90° forward flexion,
- elbow flexed,
- internal rotation



BIAS: AC JOINT TESTS

Scarf test

- Active adduction



Cross arm test

- Resisted adduction



SHOULDER EXAM

- Inspection
- Palpation: **ABCS**
- Range of motion/Strength: **SITS**
- Provocative tests: **BIAS**

THE ESSENTIAL SHOULDER EXAM FOR INTERNISTS

- **Inspection** – Bony abnormalities, muscle atrophy
- **Palpation ABC's:** AC joint, Biceps tendon, Coracoid, Subacromial space
- **ROM/Strength: SITS**
 - **Supraspinatus**
 - Abduction
 - Drop Arm/Empty Can
 - **Infraspinatus/Teres Minor**
 - External Rotation
 - ER Lag test/ Resisted ER
 - **Subscapularis**
 - Internal Rotation Spinous process level
 - IR Lag/Gerber lift off
- **Provocative Tests: BIAS**
 - **Biceps**
 - Yergason's
 - Speeds
 - **Impingement**
 - Neer's
 - Hawkins
 - **AC Joint**
 - Scarf
 - Cross Arm
 - **Stability**—Next layer