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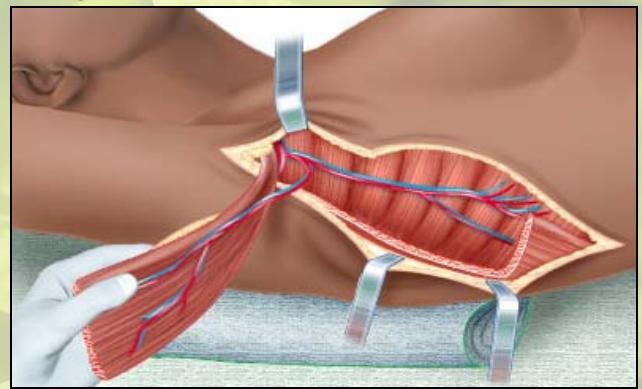
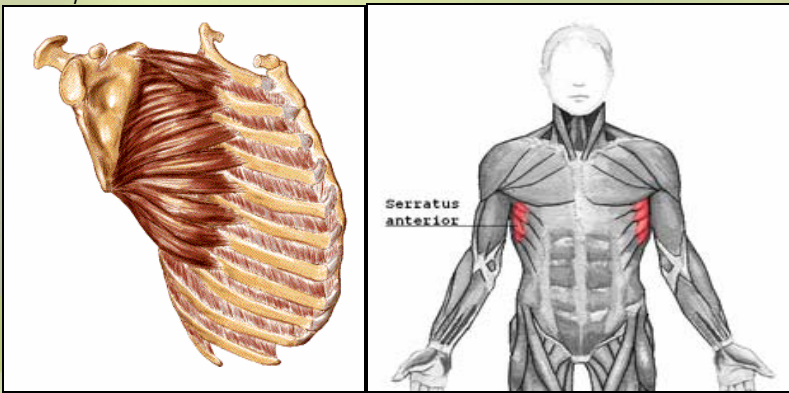
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## SERRATUS ANTERIOR JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

Hello, and Happy New Year! Thanks to you, the last quarter of 2007 was a very busy time for me, and resulted in being unable to keep up with the newsletters (the last one being in September). But I'm baa-aack ... pun intended!

**As** you well know, there is more to us than "front & back", or "upper and lower", and some of you may have been experiencing my recent trend of treating the side of the torso on the ribs and in the armpit. We are 3 dimensional, and some of our most powerful muscles are in seemingly unlikely places, thus, this month's spotlight on serratus anterior will hopefully explain why I've been focusing on this particular muscle more frequently. Below you will find various views of the serratus anterior. *Note in the first image, the shoulder blade is pulled out toward the viewer so as to see the attachment along the inside front border.*



**The** serratus anterior is a broad sheet of thick muscle with 8 finger-like slips which attach to the first 8 ribs, and was named for its saw-toothed appearance, as in a serrated knife. These muscle slips converge and attach to the front inside border of the shoulder blade, and the whole muscle acts to anchor the flat bone to the thoracic wall (imagine an octopus sitting on the front of your shoulder blade with a tentacle on each of your ribs). As one of the most powerful muscles of the pectoral girdle, its main action is forward movement of the shoulder, such as boxing, racquet sports, swimming, running, chin-ups, weightlifting, pushups, massaging, and oh, just about everything we do in life! Serratus anterior also assists in respiration by pulling the ribs up and back to expand the chest, especially during vigorous activity. Unaccustomed physical exertion and strenuous coughing can activate trigger points, which are usually felt in the side under the arm and in the back just below the shoulder blade. Taking a deep breath or completely exhaling is difficult and/or painful, and one is limited to shallow chest breathing. Reaching back or pulling the shoulders back is limited, and the constant pull on the ribs can make breasts feel quite sensitive. After releasing a few serratus anteriors, I've had several women tell me they had stopped

wearing underwire brassieres because they felt that was the irritant! The underwire was likely chafing the muscle and triggerpoints beneath, but it wasn't the main cause of irritation.

**When** muscles are tight-*short*, they create a tight-*long* pull in other areas (usually an opposite muscle or two), causing trigger points and discomfort. With serratus anterior, the shoulder blade is pulled forward toward the ribs attachment, creating a rounded shoulder appearance, and creating an overstretch of the muscles between the spine and shoulder blade. The number one complaint people come to me with is pain between the shoulder blades, but again it's usually an effect, not a cause. In treating serratus anterior trigger points (and one or two other key muscles) thoroughly, discomfort and strain between the shoulder blades are alleviated, and those trigger points too, are easily resolved.

**Here's** an easy test: lie flat on your back on the floor and raise both your arms up over your head to touch the floor above/behind your head. Can't reach? You're most likely tight-short in through the serratus anterior and a few key associated muscles. **Call or email me for an appointment to have your Serratus Anterior released. Let it be freeeee!!**