

Trigger Point Anatomy

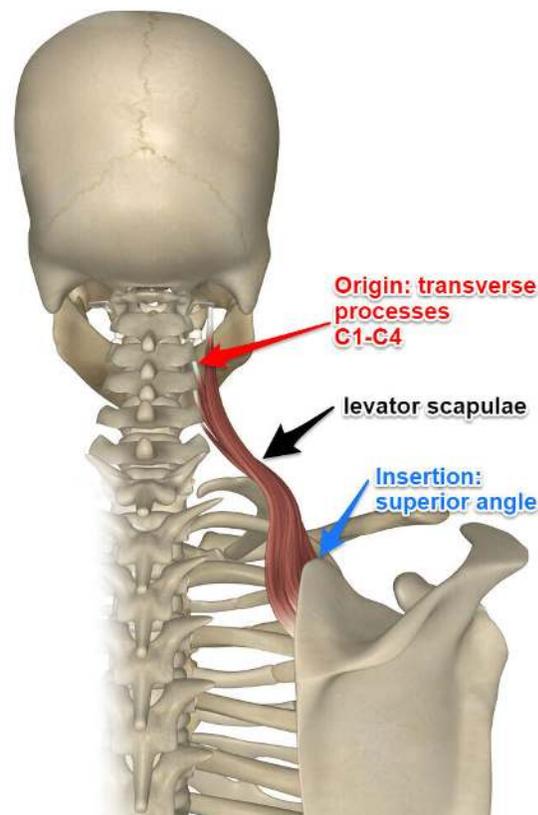
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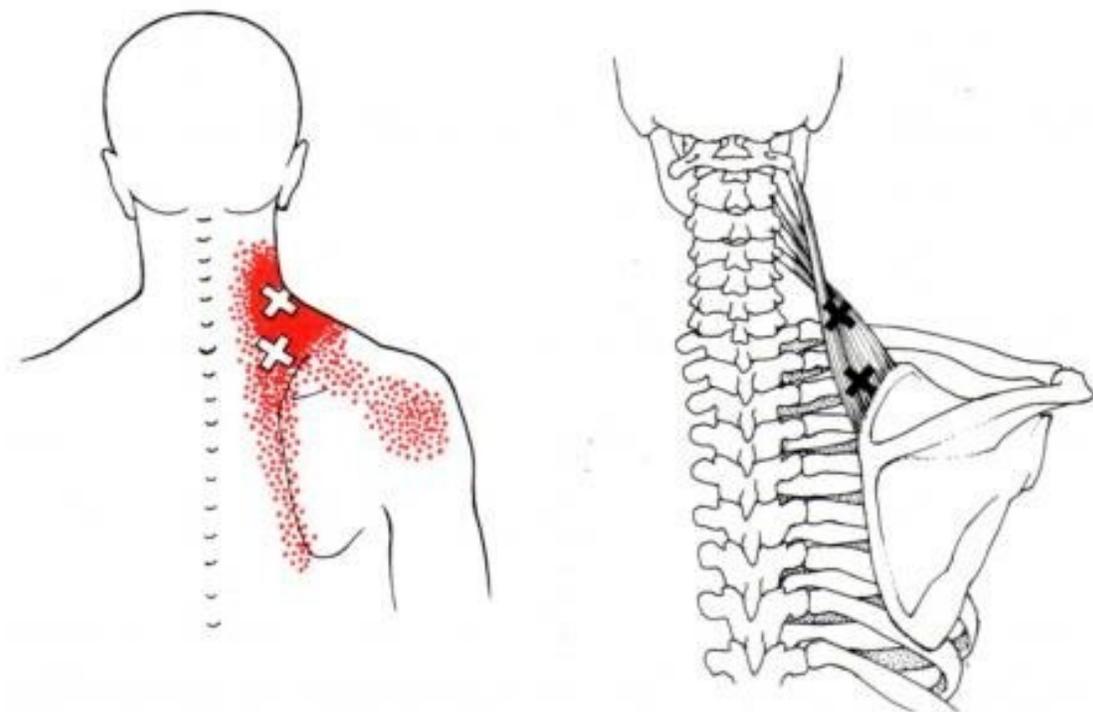
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The Levator Scapulae



The levator scapulae muscles originate from the posterior tubercles of the C1 through C4 vertebrae in the neck that is between the superior angle and the root of the scapulae spine. This superficial muscle's primary function is to elevate the scapulae or the shoulder blades while working together with the trapezius and rhomboid muscles to assist the movement. The levator scapulae muscles also assist in providing neck extension, ipsilateral rotation, and lateral flexion. When pathologies like fibromyalgia, levator scapulae syndrome, or cervical myofascial pain begin to affect the levator scapulae muscles, the symptoms can potentially involve the shoulders and neck to cause referred pain to the upper extremities.

Trigger Points & The Levator Scapulae



Trigger points occur in two places in the levator scapulae muscle. The first is just where the muscle attaches to the superior border of the scapula. This is common. A lot of people who have a sore shoulders will reach behind them. You can kind of reach this with the tip of your fingers, and the muscle itself is a flat muscle. It sits underneath the trapezius, so you have to do a little digging and find this particular trigger point, and often people will press it and, and, and play with it to try and relieve their pain. The second trigger point is halfway up the muscle, where the twist occurs in the muscle. Getting to this muscle is slightly difficult.

The trapezius overlies it, and you often have to feel underneath the trapezius. Again, you have to dig in to find this particular trigger point. When the triggers become active, you get this pattern of pain. The primary area is a very common place for people to feel pain. You can see somebody bringing their hand around this corner and grasping hold of that area, and it refers slightly up into the neck, across to the shoulder, and slightly down into this area. So, the center of it is right here. The central location of the pain resides between the scapula and the lower part of the neck, at the angle between the neck and the shoulder. One of the major symptoms that you get apart from pain is a feeling of stiffness. When the levator scapulae have trigger points, you have difficulty rotating your head to the side of the levator scapulae. So if it's on the right-hand side, you have a problem turning your head around. This is a classic. When somebody has pain in this area, they'll find that if they go to reverse the car, they'll turn their whole shoulders to get around to look behind.

Now, the possible causes of triggers in this muscle, well, it's because it's a posture muscle. If you sleep with your neck at an awkward angle, your pillow isn't adequate to support your neck. Therefore, if you have poor or suboptimal posture and slump position, this will turn on triggers. If you spend long periods holding a posture, such as working over at a computer or sitting for many hours, this will turn triggers on in this area. If you're stressed out, often emotional stress is expressed in the levator scapulae muscle. There are a related group of muscles here, which may also turn on and have triggers because there is no such thing as one muscle only. You know, all movements are complex. So related muscles that have triggers would be the trapezius, supraspinatus, rhomboids, and the infraspinatus muscle.

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