

# Trigger Point Release

*Serratus Anterior*

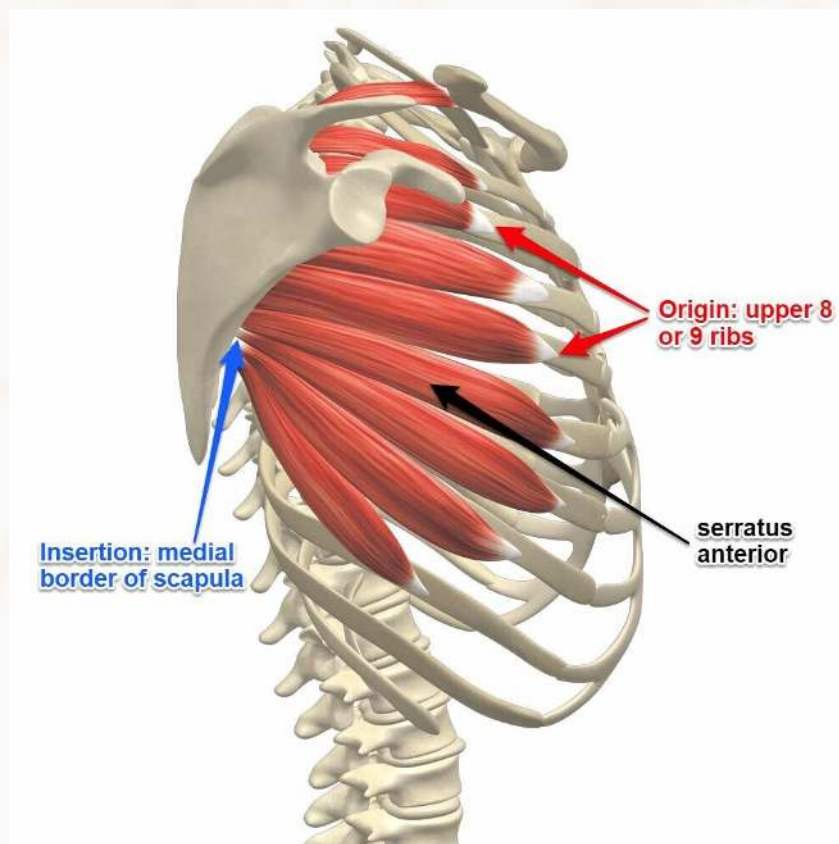
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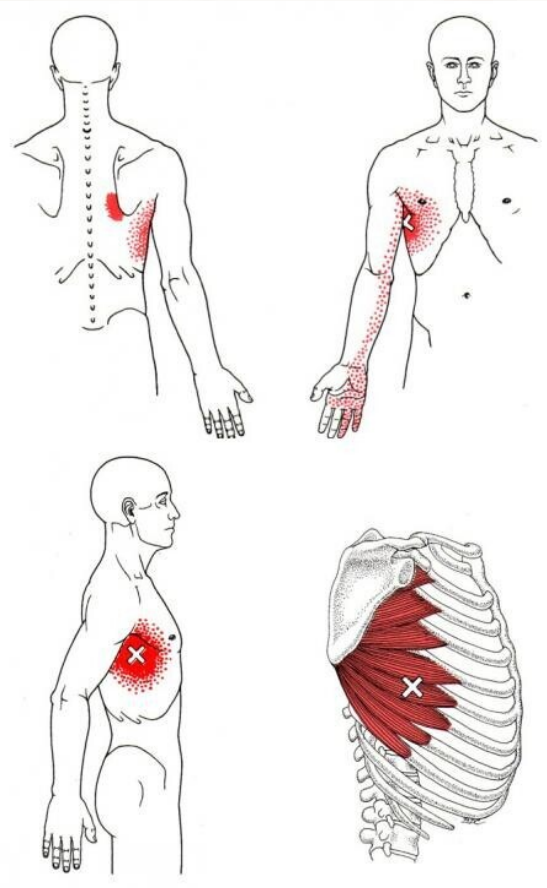
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## What Is The Serratus Anterior?

The serratus anterior muscles work in the body because this muscle is located deep within the scapula (shoulder blades) and the pectoral muscles. Some of the functions that the serratus anterior provides are that it helps pull the shoulder blades forward around the thorax by allowing anteversion and protraction of the arms. A great example is when a boxer is throwing a punch. This motor action is done with the long thoracic nerve. The long thoracic nerve originated from the C-5 and C-6 regions of the cervical spine and is the motor nerve for the serratus anterior muscle to allow an anterolateral motion for the shoulder blades that allows arm elevation. Another function of the serratus anterior is that it helps lift the ribs and provide assistance with respiration. The serratus anterior muscle also helps protect the side of the ribcage.



## Trigger Point Release On The Serratus Anterior



There is only one trigger point written off in Travell and Simons. Over the years, I've found more, so you have to search around. The trigger points usually occur in the central part of the muscle itself before you realize that the muscle, these fingers, is coming around. They're attaching it, and it's about in the middle of the axilla, just before the little fingers insert into the ribs. That's where you find the trigger. And it's somewhere in the center here. Not hard to find. So again, a very common area for there to be some tenderness. And you'll feel it over the rib because that's where the triggers are. So if you find that trigger, you can treat it with ischemic pressure as we've described. So that's sore. Yeah. Yeah. So I reduce the pressure until there's no pain, and over the next 90 seconds, I gradually increase the pressure keeping it below the pain threshold until it's pain-free.

Then we can use a cold compress for this particular muscle. It is recommended in Travell and Simons here to start with the insertion, which is the area that the muscle inserts into the ribs, and to run back to its origin and then to stretch, we take the scapula and pull it back because remembering that the muscle itself will pull the scapula forward. You stretch the scapula back like that, and if you rest your hand on your hip like that will tend to help retract the scapula.

Once we do that, sometimes I'll do two or three more runs of the cold compress under here and down like that, across here and down there, stretch it all the way. Again, the same principles, if we can't get very far, it's a very tight trigger. You can use the neuromuscular technique of taking it as far as it'll go. I'm stretching the scapular to the midline, stretching out the serratus muscle. Take a breath in, hold your breath, count 6, 5, 6, you breathe out. As you breathe out, you count 2, 3, 4, and then you'll find that you can get more of a stretch. At the end of that, I take the heat pad, and so for the heat, I run the heat pad across the whole chest wall underneath the axilla and under there, just like that.

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