

HEAD SHOULDERS KNEES & TOES

Unexplained proximal muscle weakness in children can occur in some neurologic conditions and can be easily missed during exams that only focus on distal strength.

When examining children with sudden limb, neck, or trunk weakness, remember **head**, **shoulders**, **knees**, and **toes**.

Lift both arms above the HEAD

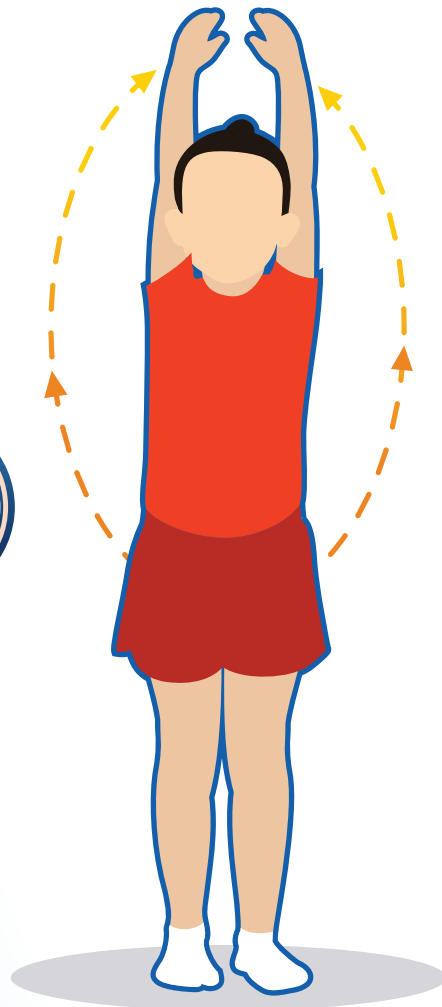
Muscle Group:

* Shoulder Girdle



Ask:

- * Are they using one limb less?
- * Can they put on a T-shirt?
- * Can they give a high-five with each hand?



Shrug the SHOULDERS

Muscle Group:

* Neck/Shoulder Girdle



Ask:

- * Is one shoulder higher than the other?
- * Can they throw a ball overhead?
- * Can they hold up their head?



Raise KNEES

Muscle Group:

* Hips



Ask:

- * Are they limping or dragging a leg?
- * Can they put on pants?
- * Can they do a squat and recover?



Reach down & touch TOES

Muscle Group:

* Trunk



Ask:

- * Are they waddling or falling while walking?
- * Can they sit up and stand without support?
- * Can they get a toy off the ground while standing?



Don't forget to check both sides and document both proximal and distal muscle strength, tone, and reflexes.

See more examples at [CDC.gov/AFM/strength](https://www.cdc.gov/AFM/strength)

