

# Muscle of the Month Fun Facts

Physical Education is the ideal environment to start teaching elementary school children about the human anatomy. It is amazing how so many different parts are able to work together as one team! Our bones make the frame of our body, called the skeleton. The bones give the body support, protect the softer parts of the body, and provide leverage for the fibrous tissues (called muscles and ligaments) that are attached to them. All our movements of our body are controlled by the work of our muscles. Muscles are attached to bones by a tough cord at the end of it called a tendon. There are over three times as many muscles in the adult body as there are bones; around 656 muscles to 206 bones. The good news is that we are only going to focus on 9 of those muscles. We are going to teach you their proper names, some nicknames, where they are located, what they do, and a variety of fun facts. For example, do you know what an Adductor is?

The Adductors are a group of muscles located in the upper and inner thigh (femur), commonly known as the groin area. The muscles work as a team to allow the legs to adduct or close together. From kindergarten to second grade the Adductors were referred to as the “Butterfly Stretch” or the “Groin Stretch”. Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Gayhead students know the nickname as the “Passing Muscle” because it is used to perform an inside of the foot pass in soccer. It also allows a person to bring their legs across their body when sitting. When injured it is what athletes call a “Groin Pull”.

The Quadriceps Femoris is the large bulky muscle in the front of the thigh (femur). It is made up of four parts that join together to cover your kneecap (patella) and form the Patellar Tendon. When this group of muscles works together, they powerfully extend or straighten the knee. Commonly known as the kicking muscle because it is primarily used when performing a front kick in karate or to kick a field goal in football. It is also used to jump or to squat down to the floor and then standing back up again. The next time a friend kicks their legs forward to use the swing on the playground, think Quadriceps!!

The Upper Trapezius is the muscle that is located along your upper back and neck. It is one of the 3 parts of the trapezius muscle, which together forms the shape of trapezoid. It is nicknamed the “I Don’t Know Muscle” because it allows a person to shrug (raise) their shoulders up to their ears when someone says, “I don’t know.” Additionally, it allows someone to be able to flex (bend) their head and neck from side to side to bring their ear to their shoulder. Lastly, the Upper Trapezius it is the most common place to have tension and stress induced neck pain.

The Supraspinatus is also known as the “Pitching Muscle”. It is one of the four muscles that make up the rotator cuff. Located in the back of the shoulder, it starts along the upper ridge of the scapula (shoulder blade), wraps around and then under the acromion (tip of the collar bone) to the front of your upper arm (humerus). This muscle allows the arm to abduct (go apart) away from the body 15 degrees to lift a book bag and hold it out to the side. Unlike most muscles that are nicknamed for their action, the Supraspinatus is called the “Pitching Muscle” because it has a very tricky location. It is the tricky location that makes it the most commonly injured shoulder muscle in baseball pitchers. There are many other fun facts. However, Mr. Piggott’s favorite is to call it “The Old Back Scratcher.”

The Gastrocnemius is also known as the “Tip Toe Muscle”. It is located in the back of your lower leg (tibia), which is the area below your knee commonly called your calf. This muscle has an extremely important action. It allows you to plantar flex your foot (or point foot down). For example, it allows you to flex (bend) your ankle to raise your heels off the ground and walk on your toes, like a ballerina. It also allows us to walk fast and jump. It has other fun facts like it is the largest muscle below your knee, has a medial head and a lateral head, and that it joins with the Soleus and Plantaris muscles to form the extremely strong Achilles Tendon. Try to walk on your tip toes to see and feel your Gastrocnemius in action.

Students need to exercise to become physically fit, and to be physically fit a person must be physically active for at least 60 minutes per day. Exercise gives you energy, improves your appetite, increases the size of the heart, helps you to run faster, and lets you enjoy all types of games. Also, it lifts your spirits, firms your muscles, improves your posture, and strengthens your bones and heart. So make sure you go out and exercise every day, your body is counting on it!