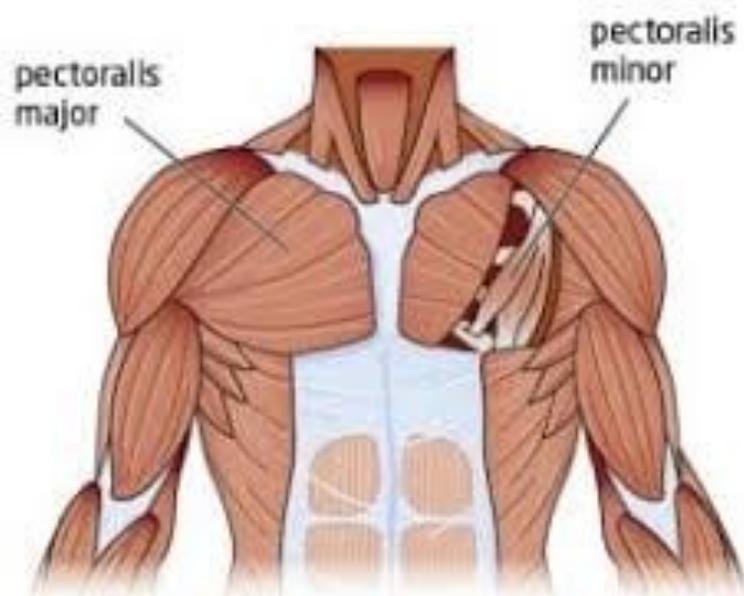


What does the pectoral muscle do?



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Pectoralis major

The **pectoralis major** muscle is a large muscle in the upper chest, fanning across the chest from the shoulder to the breastbone. The two pectoralis major muscles, commonly referred to as the 'pecs,' are the muscles that create the bulk of the chest. A developed pectoralis major is most evident in males, as the breasts of a female typically hide the pectoral muscles. A second pectoral muscle, the pectoralis minor, lies beneath the pectoralis major. The pectorals are predominantly used to control the movement of the arm, with the contractions of the pectoralis major pulling on the humerus to create lateral, vertical, or rotational motion. The pectorals also play a part in deep inhalation, pulling the ribcage to create room for the lungs to expand. Six separate sets of muscle fiber have been identified within the pectoralis major muscle, allowing portions of the muscle to be moved independently by the nervous system. Injuries to the pectoralis major can occur during weightlifting, as well as other bodybuilding exercises that place excessive strain on the shoulders and chest.

Pectoralis minor

The **pectoralis minor** is a thin, flat muscle found immediately underneath the pectoralis major. This is the smaller of the two pectoral muscles, or muscles of the chest. This muscle extends from three origins on the third, fourth, and fifth ribs on each side of the ribcage to the coracoid process (a small, hook-like structure) of the scapula, or shoulder blade. The origins of the muscle are all lateral to the costal cartilages. The primary actions of this muscle include the stabilization, depression, abduction or protraction, upward tilt, and downward rotation of the scapula. When the ribs are immobilized, this muscle brings the scapula forward, and when the scapula is fixed, it lifts up the rib cage. There are two parallel pectoralis minor muscles, one on each side of the sternum. Both pectoralis muscles work with the serratus anterior muscles to create a full range of movement for the scapula. The pectoralis minor muscle receives its arterial supply from the thoracoacromial trunk's pectoral branch. Innervation or stimulation comes from the clavicular head at C8 and T1 and the medial pectoral nerves.