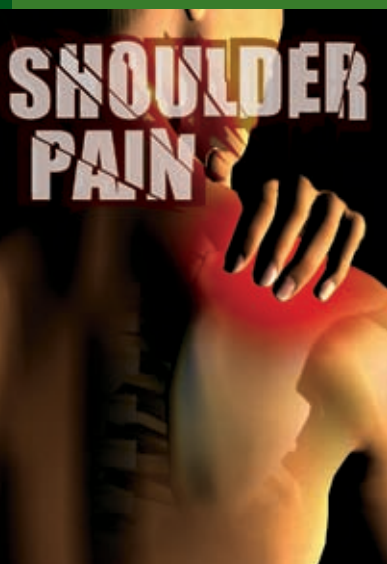


PERSONAL MESSAGE

the Challenge of Treating Shoulder Pain

by Brad Ott MSPT Cert MDT

In This Issue



2

SHOULDER PAIN

Risk factors and what to do.

3

TIPS & TRICKS

Exercises to minimize problems with shoulder pain.

4

FAQ

Most frequently asked questions about shoulder pain.

5

SHOULDER PAIN— SIMPLE TEST

What is the state of your shoulder?

FEATURED PHYSICAL THERAPIST

If you have shoulder pain, our featured therapist can help you.

SUCCESSES

6

CONTACT Us

Shoulder pain is a common complaint that physicians refer to physical therapy. The shoulder is used unconsciously in almost every activity and is a part of the body that is stressed frequently. Almost all of us know someone who has had to undergo shoulder surgery for torn tendons, chronic inflammation or rotator cuff problems. If you want to avoid surgery or at least give yourself better odds of keeping your shoulders healthy, then read on and most importantly be proactive about your shoulder health!

The shoulder joint and surrounding muscles function as a complex unit, and it can be a challenging part of the body to treat. Unlike other joints in the body that are “hinge joints” with built-in restricted motion, shoulders are “ball-and-socket joints” with the ability to move in every direction. This allows us to use our arms for daily functions overhead, behind the back or head, and across the body. The problem with such a mobile joint is that it lacks natural stability, and thus is vulnerable to strains such as tendinitis, bursitis, muscle/tendon tears and simple overuse.

Early symptoms of a shoulder problem that people too often ignore are pain in the front or side of the shoulder, difficulty reaching into a back pocket, aching at night or a sharp twinge when raising the arm. Athletes and weekend warriors may experience pain during or after their sporting activities such as swimming, golfing, throwing sports, and even bicycling. Even “desk jockey’s” who sit for hours working the computer mouse can



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Rebound Sports and Physical Therapy

begin to have painful shoulders and necks with muscle tension and knots developing on one side.

It is important to note that delays in beginning treatment usually mean a longer recovery period. The reason for this is that once your body is experiencing pain it immediately begins to compensate and modify basic movements in an attempt to avoid pain. With persisting pain our bodies begin to “inhibit” or protect against what was once natural motion. While this might be a good short-term protection against pain, over days and a few weeks this only feeds into the problem.

Treatment and long term relief of shoulder pain begins with a clear medical diagnosis of what structures are injured. A good physical therapy evaluation should uncover not only the specific diagnosis (tendinitis, bursitis, muscle strain, joint instability), but also the underlying reasons that the problem arose in the first place. This point cannot be stressed enough because it sets the tone for treating not just the symptoms of pain and inflammation but the actual root causes for the problem.

SHOULDER PAIN

RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHOULDER PAIN



“Empowering the patient is infinitely more important than creating dependence on long term therapy, drugs, or injections.”

Rebound Sports and Physical Therapy recognizes that the first, and perhaps most important step in treating or preventing shoulder pain is education. Empowering the patient is infinitely more important than creating dependence on long term therapy, drugs, or injections.

Unfortunately, human nature is to not worry about “prevention” or “maintenance” until the problem has already surfaced. Everyone realizes the importance of brushing their teeth at least twice a day to prevent problems, yet they somehow think that the rest of their body doesn’t need maintenance or a prevention strategy!

The following are common risk factors that contribute to shoulder problems:

1. Poor posture with daily activities: Slouched posture affects the way your shoulder joint is aligned relative to your ribcage and spine. It also allows important muscles to become lazy and weak. This creates increased strain to the surrounding shoulder and neck muscles, and can lead to a

variety of problems.

2. Repetitive overhead use: Working with the arms overhead repetitively, or for sustained tasks, decreases the blood flow to the tendons of the rotator cuff muscles. It increases the risk for “impingement syndrome” in which the rotator cuff tendons become inflamed.

3. Working out at the gym improperly: Working out with just the “big muscles” and failing to pay attention to the postural and stabilizing muscles can be a major contributor to shoulder pain. Many people use improper technique with the machines and free-weights which increases joint and tendon strain.

4. Overuse injuries in sports: Athletes in organized sports programs such as swimming, baseball, softball, volleyball, gymnastics, lacrosse, and golf put their shoulders through repetitive movement patterns over and over again. In doing so, they over-develop certain muscles and create imbalances that alter shoulder mechanics.



Common Shoulder Problems

Defined:

1. **Tendinitis:** Inflammation of the tendon and the sheath which surrounds it.
2. **Bursitis:** Inflammation of the “bursa” which is a fluid filled sack that decreases friction around our joints and tendons.
3. **Tendinosis:** Chronic injury to the tendon in which the cells and tissue of the tendon become damaged.
4. **Arthritis:** Damage to the bony surfaces of the ball and socket joint which then create inflammation.

Once a clear medical diagnosis has been made, it is the job of the physical therapist to clearly identify each patient's risk factors (job, hobbies, sports activities, daily living habits) and then specifically test for any contributing factors to the problem.

The therapist should be a “biomechanical detective” that uncovers the root causes for the pain and dysfunction. Once all contributing factors are identified, a very specific treatment strategy can be employed to immediately decrease pain and inflammation, and begin addressing the underlying causes so that the problem does not become recurrent.

Tips and Tricks

EASY EXERCISES FOR HEALTHY SHOULDERS

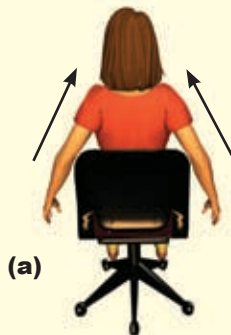
Each of these exercises can be done in sets of ten repetitions two or three times daily or as tolerated, or as directed by your Physical Therapist.



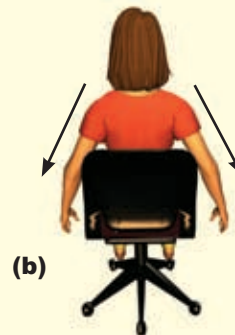
1. (left) Sit up with your spine very straight and tall, chin tucked in. This puts your shoulders and upper back in an ideal position.



2. (right) Now place your hands on each side of the seat of your chair. Keeping your elbows straight, push down lifting your butt.



(a)



(b)

3. (left) Shrug your shoulders up (a) and then, relaxing them, let them all the way down (b).



4. (right) Sitting up nice and straight, squeeze your shoulder blades together.



5. (left) Lying on your right side, with your left elbow at your side and your left hand across your stomach, lift your hand up toward the ceiling without taking your elbow off your side. Repeat on your other side.



6. (left) Standing in a doorway, forearm fully against the door jamb, lean through the doorway stretching the arm back.

7. (right) Facing a wall, walk your fingers up the wall until your arm is fully extended over your head. You will need to step closer to the wall as your arm goes higher.



FAQ

Why does my shoulder click or snap?

A tendon that is swollen can “snap” as it moves over a bone. Also there could have been some trauma to the tendon, a bone spur rubbing on the tendon or some calcium deposit in the tendon itself.

Why is my motion restricted?

Any irritation to the joint area or to the muscles themselves will cause the muscles around that area to “guard” it by tightening and trying to prevent motion. This is a protective mechanism to prevent further irritation or injury.

Why does it hurt to lift overhead?

Repetitive overhead work can lead to deep muscle fatigue and altered positioning of the joint. This leads to more irritation of the joint tissue. It is much harder for your muscles to control the motion in your shoulder joint when the arm is over your head because there is more

strain on it. As you lose joint control the result is more tissue irritation and pain.

Why does my shoulder wake me up at night?

A possible cause of this is a tear in the joint tissue or irritation of a tendon in the shoulder. If you put your shoulder in certain positions it can aggravate the irritated tissue. With overhead positioning especially, there could be pinching of the tendons or tugs on the tendon or capsule.

Why is it difficult to reach in my back pocket?

Joint irritation, pain or muscle guarding could all be a factor.

What are the symptoms of rotator cuff problems?

Pain when you reach overhead or your arm just suddenly dropping when you lift something are the typical symptoms.

Do you need to see a Physical Therapist for your shoulder pain? Take this simple test...

Simply place a check mark in the appropriate box. Once you are done, calculate the number of YESes and look at the results.

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain when you raise your arm above your head?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it hurt to reach?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain while sleeping at night?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it hurt to lie on your shoulder?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain over the outside of your shoulder in the area of the upper arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to raise your arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to carry objects or lift something?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain in the front of your shoulder?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder feel loose and unstable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder feel stiff and tight?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to reach into your back pocket?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to touch the back of your neck?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you unable to reach the back of your bra?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have pain that radiates down your arm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your arm feel achy and weak?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your shoulder hurt after working out?

Results:

Less than 3 Yes

You're doing fine. Exercising may help keep your shoulder in check.

Between 3 and 6 Yes.

Physical Therapy is an option for you.

Between 6 and 10 Yes.

We would advise you to see a doctor to get a better diagnosis. PT is definitely an option.



Featured Physical Therapist

Casey Kelly



Casey Kelly first joined Rebound in September of 2000. She has focused a great deal of her time to working with young athletes and the injuries they face. Her emphasis is on restoring the athlete to full function, including how they have to move in their particular sport. Casey enjoys learning new ideas and has over 340 hours of continuing education. Earlier this year, she passed her examination and became a Certified Kinesio Taping Practitioner.

One of Casey's main areas of interest is the shoulder and its function related to the rest of the body. She has helped rehabilitate many high level gymnasts, volleyball players, and baseball pitchers with a wide variety of shoulder problems. She currently also serves as a consultant to a local gymnastics club, helping to identify potential areas of injury and incorporate injury prevention activities into their daily regimens.

Casey grew up in Loveland, Colorado and graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Exercise and Sport Science. She then went on to Regis University in Denver where she graduated with a Master of Science, Physical Therapy in 1999. She is very active in the sport of volleyball as both a player and club coach. She is also an avid runner and huge sports fan!

SUCCESSSES

What patients are saying...

"I just wanted to thank you for all your help with my shoulder recovery. I truly believe if it weren't for you, I would not be swimming on a Division 1 swim team."

- K. O'Donnell

"I consider my PT course after rotator cuff surgery a total success. I have regained my pre-surgery strength and activity level. I loved the supportive staff who made my progress possible."

- N. Strong

"I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of Rebound for the friendly and helpful treatment after extensive shoulder surgery in March 2007. I am confident of recovering my previous strength."

- G. Turechek



"I hurt my shoulder doing jujitsu and lost strength and mobility. I did not believe that physical therapy could work but my faith has

been restored! I refer everyone to Rebound now, thank you so much!"

- A. Pepper

Tired of having **SHOULDER** **PAIN?**



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new outlook on life.

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REBOUND
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It's all about Results...

At Rebound, our primary goal is to achieve individualized wellness goals that exceed our patients' expectations! We carefully evaluate each person's needs focusing on the root cause of pain and impairment, not just the symptoms. Our highly skilled professionals blend traditional methods with innovative techniques and provide our services in a comfortable and caring atmosphere. If you're interested in reducing pain or stiffness, maintaining wellness, restoring function, preventing recurrent injury and improved physical performance, call us!



Our physical therapy and wellness staff can help you prevent injuries, get fit, and feel great! Let us help you become healthier, more functional, and independent through the best possible treatment and education for continuing self-care.

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