

Don't Just Live With Your Shoulder Pain



We can help you be able to.....

- Reach overhead without pain
- Sleep without shoulder pain
- Reach behind your back
- Reach behind you in the car
- Lift heavy objects
- Recover after a shoulder surgery

Why Does My Shoulder Hurt?

The shoulder is the most complicated and mobile joint in your body. The reason is that it has to move through a very large range of motion while maintaining strength and stability. There are many reasons why a shoulder can begin to hurt and stop you from doing normal activities.

There are 4 factors that your shoulder joint needs to be healthy and function properly:



Flexibility/ Strength/ Posture/ Coordination

If you start to lose any of the above factors, the shoulder becomes unbalanced and a results in increased strain. This can lead to a build-up of inflammation, degeneration of shoulder muscle tissue, and long term joint damage such as arthritis.

Common Painful Shoulder Causes

Rotator Cuff Tear

Rotator cuff injury tears can be either partially or fully torn. They can be either traumatic from an injury or heavy lifting. Degeneration, aging inflammation (**tendonitis**, **bursitis**, **arthritis**) trauma (falling, overuse (sports injuries, repetitive motions) are also causes.

Often, they are a product of many years of weakness and fraying to a point where they may partially break or completely rupture. Conservative treatment is usually very successful for partial tears and depending on the severity, surgery may be needed.

Symptoms:

- Shoulder pain that increases gradually, usually on the front and side of the shoulder.
- Difficulty lifting the arm away from the body fully.
- Complete inability to even hold the arm up.

Shoulder pain stay right in the shoulder joint itself, or it can radiate up into the neck or down the arm (common sites are the outside of the upper arm).

Shoulder Tendonitis

Shoulder Tendonitis is characterized by inflammation in the shoulder joint, specifically in the tendon (the attachment between muscle and bone). Shoulder tendonitis frequently occurs along with shoulder bursitis. Usually it is the muscles of the rotator cuff (Teres Minor, Infraspinatus, Supraspinatus and Subscapularis), but can also occur in the biceps tendon. Tendonitis generally occurs as a result of impingement in the shoulder joint. Gradual changes in posture cause incorrect alignment of the shoulder joint which leads to wear and tear on the tendons and bursa by pinching (or impinging) them between the boney structures. This wear and tear causes inflammation (swelling) and pain and can lead to loss of motion and weakness.

Acute Tendonitis: occurs with overuse of the shoulder (such as ball throwing or overhead activities) or a traumatic injury. Chronic Tendonitis: occurs over time by degenerative disease or general wear and tear.

Repetitive motions, especially those overhead (such as throwing, swimming, painting and carpentry) can cause tendonitis. Other causes are traumatic injury such as a fall, dislocation of the shoulder arthritis, and shoulder instability.

Symptoms of tendonitis include:

- Pain in shoulder that is present both with activity and with rest
- Pain with overhead activities
- Decrease in the range of motion (ROM) in the shoulder
- Pain while sleeping at night
- Loss of strength in the shoulder
- Pain over the outside of the shoulder and upper arm
- Noticeable swelling in the front of the shoulder

Impingement /Bursitis

Shoulder Bursitis is characterized by inflammation in the shoulder joint, specifically in the bursa (fluid filled sacs that act as a cushion or shock absorber between tendons, bone and skin). Shoulder bursitis is also sometimes called impingement syndrome. Gradual changes in posture cause incorrect alignment of the shoulder joint which leads to wear and tear on the tendons and bursa by pinching (or impinging) them between the boney structures. This wear and tear causes inflammation (swelling) and pain and can lead to loss of motion and weakness. Causes of Impingement include: Repetitive motions, especially those overhead (such as throwing, swimming, painting and carpentry); traumatic injury such as a fall; dislocation of the shoulder; arthritis (bone spurs place excess pressure on the bursa); and infection.

Symptoms

- Pain in shoulder that is present both with activity and with rest
- Pain with overhead activities
- Decrease in the range of motion (ROM) in the shoulder
- Pain while sleeping at night
- Loss of strength in the shoulder
- Pain over the outside of the shoulder and upper arm
- Noticeable swelling in the front of the shoulder

Arthritis

Shoulder arthritis occurs when the cartilage of the joint wears down. Wear and tear over time lead to bone spurs poor tissue quality, inflammation, pain, weakness, and poor shoulder mechanics. Shoulder arthritis pain can be helped with conservative treatments such as medication, cortisone injections, and physical therapy. When



shoulder arthritis is severe, surgery to replace the joint may be necessary.

Symptoms

- Soreness or stiffness in the joints, especially after a period of inactivity or overuse.
- Stiffness after rest that decreases with movement.
- Morning stiffness that goes away after about 30 minutes.
- Joint pain that usually increases throughout the day.
- Changes in coordination, posture, ability to walk secondary to pain or stiffness.
- Pain (caused by weakening of the muscles surrounding the joint due to inactivity).
- Swelling and warmth in area.
- "Creaking" of the affected joint.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis of shoulder pain is typically made by your physician which may include:

- Review of medical history
- Physical Examination
- Palpation (feeling the shoulder for pain, swelling)
- X-rays (may show narrowing of the joint)
- A possible MRI or Arthrogram
- Surgery if needed

How PRS Helps Your Pain

PRS will help your body recover from shoulder pain and weakness through physical therapy treatments and education.

Your shoulder pain and symptoms are extensively evaluated by our expert Board Certified Orthopaedic physical therapists who have years of training in medical evaluation of musculoskeletal conditions. Goals of physical therapy are to decrease pain and improve function. Actual treatment will vary depending on the severity of the injury.

Commonly, a patient will visit their Primary Care Physician complaining of shoulder pain and will be referred to a PT. They can confirm the diagnosis by completing a detailed history of the problem, along



with a thorough evaluation of the shoulder joint (motion, strength, pain, sensation, joint mobility). Once the evaluation is complete and treatment is initiated, it will usually consist of the following:

- **Behavior Modification:** Instructions will be given on how to change activities to limit more traumas to the area.
- **Postural Modification:** Poor posture is often associated with shoulder pain. Improper posture causes mal-alignment of the shoulder joint and contributes to impingement. Instructions will be given on how to correct posture.
- **Therapeutic Exercise:** In order to correct posture and regain strength and motion in the shoulder joint, it is necessary to perform specific exercises that will target these areas to improve posture, stretch tight muscles, and strengthen weak muscles.
- **Modalities:** A physical therapist will use many modalities (or pieces of equipment) in the clinic to help relieve inflammation and pain. You can expect to receive any or of the following:
 - Electrical Stimulation, Ultrasound, Ice, Heat, Iontophoresis
- **Manual Techniques:** The use of joint and soft tissue mobilization can help increase motion in the joint and decrease pain in the local area.



If conservative methods fail and surgery is performed, physical therapy is an important part of the recovery process. Most orthopedic surgeons have specific programs (called protocols) in place that specify exactly how much and what the patient can do each day or week following the surgery. The physical therapist makes sure that these protocols are followed.

Free Consultation

Call for a [Free 15 Minute Consultation](#) with a Physical Therapist to see if we can help you with your pain today!

Download our Referral for your care

Download our referral and let your physician know we are **your choice** for getting you “pain free”.

- [Physical Therapy Referral](#)