



The (In) Flexible Shoulder

The shoulder is one of the most flexible joints in the human body. We can move our shoulders in directions like no other joint. Owing to its flexibility, we can do things like paint a ceiling or pitch a baseball.

This flexibility comes at the price of stability. Since the shoulder is held together by ligaments and muscles, and has a lot of mobility, it is one of the most *unstable* joints in the body.

What's your risk?

If you have a job or play a sport that requires a lot of shoulder mobility and flexibility, you may be at risk for shoulder injuries.

The following individuals, for example, are highly susceptible:

- Overhead athletes, like tennis players, swimmers, baseball pitchers
- Painters
- Construction workers
- Movers

Having said that, every one of us is at risk for shoulder injuries, especially as we grow older.



Common Injuries Of The Shoulder

Common symptoms include:

- Pain when raising the arm
- Pain that persists beyond a few days
- Swelling or bruising around the arm
- Pain when leaning on, or sleeping on the affected shoulder
- Weakness in the arm that stops you from lifting a grocery bag, reaching up, or pushing open a heavy door
- Having difficulty or being unable to carry your child
- Inability to use the arm



Overuse and *trauma* are the most common reasons the shoulder is prone to injury. The muscles that support the shoulder - the rotator cuff muscles - can suffer from wear and tear trauma. In some cases, where there is no known cause for shoulder pain. Years of poor posture or improper movement patterns can play a role.

Repetitive activities lead to **repetitive stress injuries**. Also, too much wear and tear of the shoulder muscles and the joint capsule, or even **UNDERUSE** of the arm itself, can lead to **frozen shoulder**.

If you suffer from any of the symptoms mentioned above, call our office today. Relief is just a phone call away!

Your Physical Therapist – A Shoulder To Lean On

Stress on your shoulder is one of the most common causes of shoulder injury, but one of the most overlooked reasons for shoulder injury is **inactivity**. When you don't use the muscles regularly, they become weaker. The phrase **"If you don't use it, you lose it"** is applicable to muscles.

If you don't exercise the full range of your shoulder through moderate-intensity exercise, the risk of hurting your shoulder increases. Ligaments tighten, muscles weaken, and blood flow becomes inhibited. Over time, this can accelerate joint degeneration and trigger shoulder pain.

We have the solution.

1. Regular exercise (power walking with good arm movement, swimming, golf, tennis) may minimize the onset and severity of shoulder pain.
2. Proper body mechanics – this can be counter-intuitive. Ask your therapist if your body mechanics need to be corrected.
3. Strength and Flexibility – balanced muscles of the shoulder, chest, upper back, and abdominals help keep your shoulder joints well-aligned and pain free.



Remember, **common sense is the best line of defense** against hurting your shoulder. It is important to not push yourself too much, especially if there is discomfort. Don't do too much activity too soon. If you experience ANY pain in your shoulder with any activity, stop! If it is MILD, use ice for 10-15 minutes and rest your shoulder. If pain persists for more than 1-2 days, call your doctor or physical therapist. **Don't ignore the pain.**

The quicker the problem is addressed, the sooner you can begin healing and returning to your favorite activities.

We are here to serve you and help you achieve a speedy recovery as quickly as possible. We'll give you a shoulder to lean on, so you have a healthy, pain-free shoulder.

Tip to consider:

To reduce shoulder strain, store frequently used items no higher than shoulder level.