

Shoulder - Rotator Cuff Pain

ARE YOU FEELING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

Pain or tenderness in the front, side or back of the shoulder that occurs when

- throwing
- serving
- spiking
- hitting an overhead shot
- hitting a backhand stroke
- hitting a forehand stroke
- sleeping on your side
- raising arm overhead
- beginning a game or workout



Front of shoulder blade



Back of shoulder blade

Overuse injuries to the rotator cuff muscles (surrounding the shoulder blade - see above) are common in racquet, throwing and hitting sports and swimming. These muscles are specifically involved in motions used in these sports and also in helping to hold the upper arm bone in the shoulder socket. Rotator cuff injuries often involve muscle strength and flexibility imbalances.

This condition is often brought on by:

- Increasing the speed and force of throwing or hitting motions too quickly when starting a new sport season
- Repeatedly hitting or throwing at high speed and with high forces over a long period of time
- Tight pectoral (chest), posterior shoulder joint capsule, and rotator cuff and lat (mid back) muscles
- Weak rotator cuff muscles
- Faulty throwing, hitting and weightlifting technique

TO RELIEVE PAIN AND SPEED RECOVERY

Unless your shoulder pain is severe or you're unable to raise your arm, you can try the following:

- **Rest** from all activities that cause pain, especially throwing and racquet sports and golf.
- **Ice** 2-3x/day. Place crushed ice in a plastic bag over the shoulder for 15 minutes.
- **Aspirin or Ibuprofen**
To reduce pain: take according to the product's guidelines.
To reduce inflammation: take 650 mg. of aspirin or 400 mg. of ibuprofen three times a day for 1-2 weeks.

Important: Stop taking if medication causes stomach upset or bloody stools.

STRETCH - to reduce tension in the rotator cuff and tightness in the chest muscles.

Technique: Warm up until you start to sweat, stretch to a gentle pull and hold without bouncing.

Frequency: Do 4-8 repetitions per day, 5-7 days per week.



Overhead (LAT) Stretch

- Raise arms overhead until you feel a stretch in upper back and back of shoulders.
- Hold, without bouncing for 20 seconds.
- *Stop doing this exercise if it makes shoulder pain worse.*



Chest (PEC) Corner Stretch

- Stand in corner with arms on walls and one foot in front of other.
- Slowly bend lead knee until you feel a gentle stretch in chest muscles.
- Hold, without bouncing for 20 seconds.
- Do not rest entire body weight on upper arms; this can stretch the stabilizing structures of the shoulder.



Priming the Pump Stretch

- Lie on side with upper arm out 90° and elbow bent.
- Grab your forearm with the opposite hand.
- Slowly push the forearm down toward floor until you feel a gentle shoulder stretch.
- Hold 2-3 seconds then relax.



Neck Stretch

- Sit tall and hold onto edge of chair with hand.
- Slowly pull head down to side until you feel a stretch on opposite side of your neck.
- Hold, without bouncing for 20 seconds.



Pit Stretch

- Sit tall and hold onto edge of chair with hand.
- Slowly pull your head to the side and rotate down until you feel a stretch.
- Hold, without bouncing for 20 seconds.

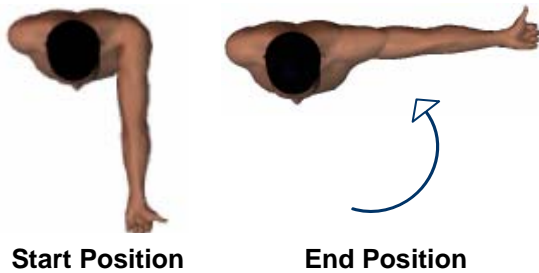
STRENGTHEN - the rotator cuff and upper back muscles to prevent injury

Technique:	Start with 1-2 pounds, when able to do 3 sets of 15 repetitions without fatigue, increase weight by 1 pound.
Frequency:	Do three sets of ten repetitions, 3-4 days per week.
Goal:	5-7 pounds



Throwing (rotator cuff)

1. Lie on your side with your lower elbow bent 90°.
2. Rest the forearm on a table or floor and hold 1-2 lbs.
3. Keeping your elbow tight to your side, slowly raise your forearm straight up to your stomach.
4. Hold for two seconds, then slowly lower.



Hitchhiker (upper back and rotator cuff)

1. With arm dangling down, bend forward at the waist with your knees bent, or lie on your stomach.
2. Straighten your elbow and point your thumb away from your body.
3. Slowly raise your arm up to your side.
4. Hold for two seconds, then slowly lower.

Shoulder Blade Squeeze



1. Lie on your stomach with your elbows bent down.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together.
3. Raise your lower arms parallel to the floor and perpendicular to the elbows.
4. Hold for three seconds.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- Your shoulder pain continues after two weeks of self-care.
- You feel sharp, shooting pain even at rest (sitting or sleeping).
- You can't raise your arm above shoulder level.
- You see or feel a deformity in the collarbone, including the outer tip and where it attaches to the breastbone (indicates a possible fracture or separation).
- You feel unusual numbness or tingling in your arm, hands or fingers (indicates possible circulation or nerve problems).
- Your hand or fingers are blue and cold (indicates possible circulation problems).
- Your shoulder is red and hot and you have a fever (indicates possible infection).

If you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment,
please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700.**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information
in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web Site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>