

Good Muscular Health

Professional soft tissue injury prevention and management



October, 2007



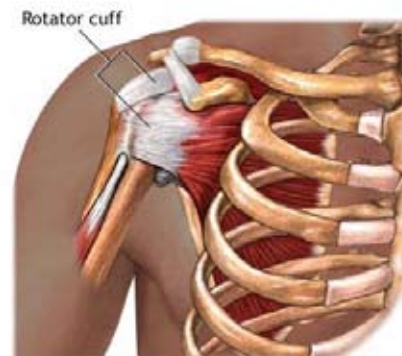
Spring is here!

So next "RnR" its time to: start the new fitness program to get fit so we can squeeze into our bathers this Summer, get into the garden so we can keep up with the Jones' and their flash new water feature or get off the couch and onto the golf or tennis court now that the sun is shining!

With spring and all these activities entered into one of the most common problems we as Myotherapists see is the onset of Shoulder pain...

This month I am going to help you better understand Shoulder Pain, Rotator Cuff Tendonitis/Tear or Swimmers shoulder call it what you like... it hurts and it's restrictive. However it can be treated and more importantly prevented!

Have you ever heard a popping sound in your shoulder, have a dull ache in your shoulder or arm, do you find it difficult to put your shirt on or get pins and needles in your arm/hands at night? If the answer is yes then you like many people probably suffer from this condition.



The shoulder joint is an amazing and complex piece of engineering. It's unique formation of bones, muscles and tendons and provides fantastic range of motion for your arm, however with extreme mobility comes a lack of stability, which makes the shoulder joint vulnerable to injury.

Brief Anatomy

Simply put the shoulder is made up of three bones, and the tendons of the Rotator Cuff Muscles. (Remember, tendons attach muscle to bone.) The bones are called the 'Scapula', the 'Humerus' and the 'Clavicle'. Or, in layman's terms, the shoulder blade, the upper arm bone and the collarbone, respectively. The muscles which make up the Rotator Cuff are called, 'Supraspinatus', 'Infraspinatus', 'Teres Minor' and 'Subscapularis'. It is the tendons of these muscles, which connect to the bones that help to move your arm.

Causes

There are two major causes of most shoulder injuries. The first and most important in a repetitious environment being degeneration, or general wear and tear (overuse). Unfortunately, the shoulder due to its nature receives very little blood supply. The tendons of the rotator cuff muscles receive very little oxygen and nutrients from blood supply, and as a result are especially vulnerable to degeneration with aging and overuse. This is why Rotator Cuff problems in the elderly are common.

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The second cause of most shoulder injuries is due to excessive force, or simply putting too much strain on the tendons of the shoulder muscles. This usually occurs when you try to lift something that is too heavy or with trauma.

Treatment

The earlier a shoulder injury is treated, the better! The first 48 to 72 hours are crucial to a complete and speedy recovery. The first and most important course of action is the R.I.C.E.R. regime Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation and Referral (to a Doctor/Therapist). After using R.I.C.E.R. for at least 48 to 72 hours, it's time to move onto the next stage of treatment. As I said before, the shoulder joint receives very little blood supply. So, what can you do to increase blood flow, oxygen and nutrients to the injured area which are needed for repair and recovery?

- 1. Heat!** Moist Heat is extremely good for increasing blood flow to a particular area. So pull out the wheat bag and use it, heat creams are also useful but not a substitute.
- 2. Myotherapy!** Massage is one of the best ways to increase blood flow and the oxygen and nutrients that go with it. As Myotherapists we also use Myofascial Dry Needling which is a very specific way to direct perfusion (blood flow) through the injured tissue, this type of treatment is imperative to reduce the amount of scar tissue which is associated with all muscle and tendon, strains and tears.
- 3. Movement!** Don't stop moving. Some Practitioners will often tell patients to keep the injured area still... this is not always the best advice and each case is different. Gentle movement will help to keep the blood flowing to the injured area. Of course, if pain is present, limit the amount of moving you do, but don't stop moving all together.

Prevention

Prevention is the key and as much as your going to hate what I am about to say – I'm going to say it anyway, **STRETCH STRETCH STRETCH!!!!** Simple, gentle stretching is proven to reduce injury and the risk of re-injury especially in such a mobile joint such as the shoulder. You should stretch and do a gentle warm up before all activity. There are a few simple stretches at the bottom of this page to get you started but for further info contact the Myotherapist when they are next on site.

Along with Stretching a strengthening program is equally important so make an appointment at the Health Start office for an appraisal and program!

I hope you have found this article helpful and it has given you a better understanding of the shoulder joint and Rotator Cuff Tendonitis, I have enjoyed bringing to you and keep an eye out for our next column on Low Back Pain.

If you suffer from Rotator Cuff Tendonitis or have a similar condition and would like treatment that will increase your range of motion and most importantly decrease the pain, then call the Occ. Health Nurse for an appointment or catch up with Nick and Drew when they are next on site.

Enjoy the sunshine and start Stretching!

Travis Sullivan

Myotherapist
Australia Wide Myotherapy



Pectoral Stretch

Rhomboid Stretch

Rotator Cuff Stretch

Tricep Stretch