

ACUTE SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT SYNDROME

WHAT IS IT?

Shoulder impingement occurs when the rotator cuff muscles or shoulder ligaments become inflamed and pinched between the bony structures of the shoulder joint. In some cases there are degenerative changes in the muscle tissue.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Repeated overhead movements or sustained positions with the shoulder in a position compressing the muscles and ligaments, (arm out to the side and rotated inward.)

Poor postural habits with poor shoulder position causes some muscles to become weak and over stretched while others become tight and shortened.

Trauma, such as a fall or a blow to the shoulder or a single heavy lift.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?

If you follow the advice of this handout and your health care provider, you should expect slow, steady recovery within 6-8 weeks.

It may take several months for the muscle tissue to be restored to a healthy state when there are degenerative changes present. Permanent activity modification may be necessary.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

- **Ice** to decrease pain and inflammation.
Apply to the top and side of shoulder **15** minutes, **3-4** times each day.
- **Medication** - Talk to your health care provider or consult the *Healthwise Handbook*.
It may take 10-14 days for the medication to be fully effective.
- **Avoid Painful Movements** – In particular, avoid using your shoulder in the position, which pinches the inflamed muscles and ligaments.
- **Improve Postural Alignment** – To avoid pinching painful structures, avoid working with your shoulders rounded forward. Sit or stand upright and try to hold your shoulder blades back and down (Think about trying to put your elbows in your back pockets.)
- **Exercise** - Do the exercises listed on the back of this form only when you are able to do them without increasing your pain.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

Follow up with your health care provider if you have followed the advice of this handout for 2-3 weeks and your shoulder pain is spreading, getting worse or not improving **or** you develop numbness or tingling in the arm or hand.

Tips to Protect your Painful Shoulder

- Use a foot stool or ladder to reach overhead. Avoid working overhead for more than a few minutes at a time.
- Lift and carry loads close to your body. Avoid lifting heavy loads.
- Take frequent breaks from repetitious activity.
- Sleep on your back or on unaffected shoulder.
Use a pillow between your affected arm and body.
- Avoid carrying your purse, backpack or other object over shoulder.
- Avoid propping yourself on the painful shoulder, such as resting your arm on the auto window ledge.

- **Sit and stand with good posture**

Sitting Posture

Head over shoulders
Shoulders back, not rounded
Use a towel roll to support your lower back
Feet flat on floor or supported



Standing Posture

Head over shoulders
Chin and eyes level, ears in line with shoulders
Shoulders slightly back and down, NOT FORWARD

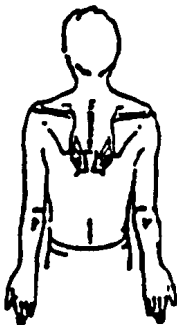
Movements to Improve Mobility and Ease Pain

Do these exercises 5 times/day. Start with 3 repetitions. Hold stretches for 10-15 seconds

Exercises must be performed in a **PAIN FREE** way.

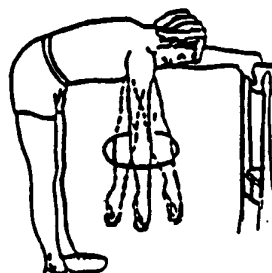
Shoulder blade squeezes

Stand or sit with upright posture
Pull both shoulder blades together and down toward buttock. Hold 10 sec.



Pendulum Exercise

Allow arm to "dangle" freely
Swing arm in circular motion, clockwise and counter clockwise.



Caudal Glide

Gently grasp edge of table and lean trunk away from hand.

