

Your Injury

Pain from the shoulder is common and the pain may either be close to the joint or may radiate down the arm. It is often caused by a pinching of soft tissue structures under the tip of the shoulder, which may then become inflamed. This is called impingement. As the arm is moved into certain positions, or load is taken though the arm, the structures become more pinched and the pain is increased. This leaflet is designed to give you an understanding of your shoulder condition and an outline of how your treatment is likely to progress.

Warm up & Warm Down

When injured it is particularly important that you warm up with a fast walk for 3-4 minutes before you start your exercises. This increases your circulation and helps prepare your muscles for the activity to come. When you have finished your exercises it is also important to allow your heart rate to slow down and gradually by ending the session with a gentle walk for 3-4 minutes.

Your condition

This condition may start following some type of injury but often begins slowly as a result of the way in which you move and the way you hold your upper body and arm.

Your whole posture can affect your shoulder and treatment will need to address not just the local shoulder area but your neck, upper back and sometimes even your lower back and legs. Certain muscles around your shoulder may be used too much and others not enough, causing an alteration in the way the joint moves. Even seemingly minor changes in the coordination between these muscles can have serious affects on the soft tissue within your shoulder.

Your treatment may include the following:

Pain relief: Electrotherapy or acupuncture may be used or you may be asked to use ice or heat at home.

Tape: Specific tape may be applied to improve the posture of your shoulder and to encourage a more ideal movement pattern and posture. It should also help to ease your pain.

Treatment of the spine: Your neck and/or back may need to be mobilised to loosen it or to relieve pain.

Treatment of the soft tissues: Soft tissue therapy may be needed to stretch tightness or relieve the pain coming from some of the local muscles.

Exercises: You will be given exercises such as those on the next page, to either loosen tight structures or improve the function of certain muscles. These may involve muscles of the shoulder and shoulder blade, trunk of pelvis, as they all play a role.

Corticosteroid injections: Your doctor or therapist may recommend up to three corticosteroid injections to reduce inflammation if other treatments have failed.

Further investigation: Sometimes your therapist may suggest a second opinion of further investigation in the form of an x-ray or scan.

Your treatment aims to:

- Reduce the pain
- Improve the way the muscles around your shoulder work to control it.

Improve the coordination between your body and your shoulder
So that you:

- Can return to activity quickly, and
- Are less likely to hurt yourself again.

Stretching and strengthening exercises

1. Shoulder blade control

Lean forwards onto a wall so that you are taking some weight through your elbows and forearms. Keeping the trunk still, the shoulders down away from your ears and your chest away from the wall, slide arms up and down the wall. Do this 10 times, 3 times a day.