

Rotator Cuff Injury

Rotator cuff Injury of the shoulder is a very common condition involving the tendons of the rotator cuff. The rotator cuff is made up of 4 muscles that function to hold the arm into the shoulder socket.

Common causes of Rotator Cuff injuries include impingement and degeneration. Impingement occurs when the rotator cuff gets pinched or squashed when the arm is raised. This can lead to rotator cuff problems if it occurs repetitively or traumatically (e.g. fall onto shoulder). If rotator cuff injuries are not treated appropriately the tendon will continue to weaken and can eventually tear.

Symptoms

Pain and weakness are the two main problems resulting from rotator cuff tears. A vague pain on the outside of the shoulder may be felt, or a "catching" sensation when the arm is moved. The level of weakness experienced is relative to the size of the tear in the tendon. Sleep is likely to be affected as most people are often woken by the pain in the affected side, especially if lying on that side.

Treatment

Avoidance of any activities that cause pain in the shoulder.

1. Improvement of shoulder mechanics to prevent further impingement of tendon. This may include:

- Massage and stretching
- Strengthening of weak muscles
- Activities to Change your pattern of movement

2. Use of anti-inflammatory tablets or steroid injections.

3. In severe cases, surgery may be necessary to repair tears and/or decompress the tendons.



Physiotherapy treatment will assist recovery and may consist of:

- Joint movement
- Posture correction
- Strengthening and stretching exercises
- Planning return to work/sport programs
- Soft tissue massage
- Taping

Initially the pain may worsen with treatment due to the inflammatory nature of the injury.

Recovery will depend on age, the severity of the tear, necessity for surgery, and the patient's response to treatments. These injuries are slow to heal with recovery time ranging from 6 weeks to 12 months.

To avoid recurrence a home exercise program, to build adequate strength, is an essential component of your rehabilitation.

For more information feel free to ask your physiotherapist.



Hours: Monday - Thurs: 7.30am - 6.30pm, Fri: 7.30am - 5.00pm, Sat: 7.30am - 12.00pm, Sun: Closed

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