



Shoulder Pain & You

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Have you ever experienced a sharp stabbing in your shoulder when you:

- play tennis
- throw a ball
- open a jar
- take off your sweater
- carry your briefcase or a heavy suitcase

If you have, you may be experiencing rotator cuff tendonitis. Tendonitis is an inflammatory condition of tendons that develops as a result of repeated microtrauma. It is characterized by painful scarring within the tendon and pain with the use of the affected muscle. It may be included under the term "repetitive strain injury".

The causes of tendonitis can be as direct as falling hard on your shoulder or as complex as a repetitive movement that causes microtearing to the tendon, and over time micro-adhesions and degeneration of the tendon.

If your injury is new, immediately ice the area, stop the activity that aggravates the pain and allow time for healing. Once the acute inflammation has settled down, deep tissue friction massage and trigger point massage therapy can be very successful in the treatment of tendonitis. It takes less time to heal this injury if it is dealt with sooner rather than later.

If your tendonitis is chronic you will require deep tissue and friction massage to break down the adhesions that have formed, which will allow for an increase in the range of motion in that particular joint. Trigger point massage and muscle stripping is also needed on the affected muscle as well as surrounding muscles.

If activity is stopped and you allow time for healing, the prognosis is very good for this type of injury. Re-injury must be prevented by modifying the aggravating activity and following a graduated exercise program.

Home care for this injury would include:

- icing the area after any activity that irritates the tendon
- gentle pain free stretching of the tendon
- gradually working up to exercises with weights to restore full muscle function
- self massage applied to the affected muscles