

# Shoulder Pain

Shoulder pain is a common condition. Symptoms vary from person to person but generally include:

- Pain in your shoulder and upper arm
- Difficulty raising your arm and reaching overhead
- Inability to carry objects or use your arm normally
- Difficulty sleeping and lying on your shoulder

## Causes of shoulder pain

Many factors can contribute to the development of shoulder pain. Often it is not a single factor but a combination of the following:

- Age
- Injury or trauma
- Repetitive overhead activities (e.g., swimming, occupation)
- Weak muscles or muscle imbalances

Some of the more common conditions include:

- Rotator cuff tendonitis (inflammation of the rotator cuff tendons)
- Rotator cuff tear (tearing to the rotator cuff tendons)
- Shoulder instability (looseness of the shoulder joint)
- Frozen shoulder (pain and stiffness)
- Impingement (pinching of the shoulder's tendons and soft tissues)

## How physiotherapists help

Getting an accurate diagnosis and identifying the contributing factors is key to effective treatment. Physiotherapists are highly skilled at assessing people with various types of shoulder pain. Physiotherapists can determine the best treatment for your condition. Generally, they prescribe:

- Mobility exercises to increase shoulder movement
- Specific exercise to improve shoulder muscle control
- Manual therapy to increase movement of stiff shoulders
- Education on activities to continue or reduce
- Modalities for pain control

## Your physiotherapist will:

- Assess and determine the cause of your pain
- Screen out serious conditions requiring medical follow-up
- Examine your strength and how you move your shoulder
- Apply special tests to isolate the problem
- Determine if your posture, work or sporting activities contribute to the problem

For most shoulder conditions, there is no quick fix. Progress often takes several weeks.



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