

## SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT

The shoulder joint is one of the most complex joints in the body. It is supported by four main muscles known as the Rotator Cuff. The rotator cuff has an important role in the function of the shoulder by providing active stability. Unfortunately, due to the close proximity of some of these muscles to the moving shoulder joint they are vulnerable to strain, and have a high incidence of injury.

Shoulder Impingement is a very general term used to describe pinching or trapping of the tendons of the rotator cuff and/or the bursa (a fluid filled sac in the shoulder joint) between the humeral head and the acromion process of the shoulder blade. The most common symptoms in impingement syndrome are pain, weakness and a loss of movement of the affected shoulder. The pain is often worsened by shoulder overhead movement and may occur at night, especially if lying on the affected shoulder.

A number of factors can contribute to this condition ranging from structural changes to muscle imbalances, therefore, thorough assessment by a physiotherapist is recommended to determine a true diagnosis and devise a management plan suitable for the individual.

Factors that can contribute to Shoulder Impingement can include:

- Poor Posture
- Muscle tightness/weakness
- Age
- Repetitive strain
- Technique errors

Early intervention is of great importance to restoring function and preventing further injury. Physiotherapy treatment will usually consist of soft tissue techniques and a structured exercise program. In some cases, corticosteroid injection may be recommended and in severe circumstances surgery may be required.



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