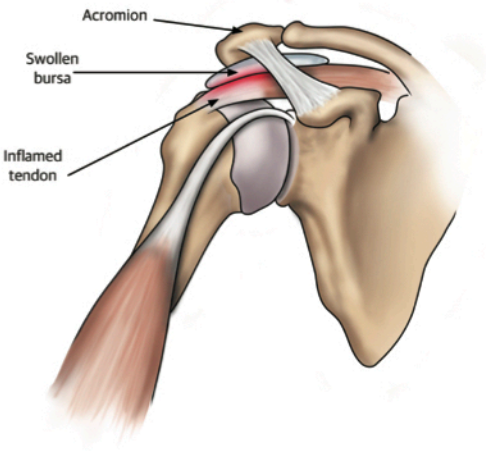
SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT

What is Shoulder Impingment?

The shoulder consists of 3 bones: the shoulder blade (scapula), upper arm (humerus) and the collarbone (clavicle). The humerus and the scapula are connected by the rotator cuff – a group of four muscles (the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, subscapularis and teres minor) that stabilizes the shoulder joint and keep the upper arm in its socket (the glenoid fossa). Between the rotator cuff and the distal portion of the scapula (acromion) is a lubricating sac (bursa) that allows the rotator cuff tendons to glide freely during arm movement. If the space between the acromion the humerus decreases or if the bursa becomes inflamed this will cause the "impingement".



What can cause shoulder impingement?

Repeated overhead activities involved in sports including swimming, weight lifting or tennis can lead to muscular imbalances increasing the risk for shoulder impingement. Poor posture faults leading to weakend muscles of the shoulder complex can also be a contributing factor. Acute shoulder injuries such as falls, bone abnormalities narrowing the space around the acromion or thickening of the bursa or the rotator cuff tendons can cause the shoulder impingent syndrome.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Decreased range of motion during movements including reaching overhead, behind the body or to the side.
- Pain during above described movements and when sleeping on the side of the affected shoulder.
- Pain during dynamic motions as in throwing.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

- Rest and a limitation of overhead activities
- Ice and over-the-counter anti-inflammatories to reduce pain and swelling during the acute phase
- Exercise programming to restore strength and range of motion
- Correcting of postural patterns that are leading to muscular imbalances.
- Light massage

Prevention strategies

It is important to include an exercise protocol that focuses on regaining strength and flexibility. These should be performed on a regular basis for a minimum of 6 weeks. Soft tissue work using a foam roller can be helpful to restore muscular imbalances around the shoulder area and is most effective when erformed before the stretching routine. Maintaining good posture during everyday activities will also help prevent the development of muscular imbalance and thus the shoulder impingement syndrome. Discuss these options with your health care professional to determine which would be the best treatment approach for you.

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