

Physical Therapy Crucial for Shoulder Health



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normal movement for the shoulder. Adequate strength of the muscles will allow good mobility and stability in the joint and promote strong bone health. A few main muscle groups are especially important stabilizers that are often not targeted in traditional workouts.

The first major muscle group is the rotator cuffs. You have four different rotator cuff muscles: the supraspinatus, subscapularis, infraspinatus, and teres minor. These muscles run along your scapula and attach to the head of the humerus, which allows you to throw a ball or wash dishes.

These muscles mainly provide rotation of the shoulder, known as internal and external rotation, though they help in many other motions as well. In addition to providing movement, they are dynamic stabilizers. As the shoulder moves, the rotator cuff assists with keeping the “ball” moving within the socket while preventing excessive movement and translation within the joint.

The second major muscle group is the postural stabilizers which include muscles of the scapulothoracic complex. These muscles assist in the movement and stability of the scapula and contribute to postural stability. With these muscles you are able to get up from the floor or hold a plank position.

Posture is an important factor in shoulder health. Good alignment is the most efficient for shoulder movement. Try this: sit in your poorest posture with your head forward, a rounded back and shoulders and try to lift your arm up. Now try sitting nice and upright with your head over your shoulders and move your arm. You will notice your arm moves a lot more when you are upright than when you are in a slumped position.

An upright posture provides the most optimal position for your humerus, scapula, and clavicle. As a result, your arm will be able to reach and pick up something from the top shelf. Poor posture is often a big factor when it comes to chronic shoulder injuries, like shoulder impingement.

In physical therapy, shoulder impingement is frequently

diagnosed. This is where the tissues between the end of the clavicle, the acromion, and the humerus become irritated. The rotator cuff tendons in this space can become pinched and irritated when moving and lifting the arm, which can cause pain.

Like any muscle, there can be tendon injuries like tendinopathy or tendinitis. Rotator cuff tendinopathy is a shoulder injury that sometimes occurs suddenly after an accident, but it's often an overuse injury where the tendon gets inflamed. People can experience pain, strength deficits, and range of motion issues that will impact daily activities or recreational activities.

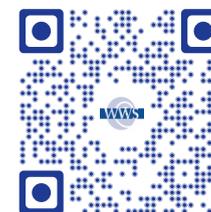
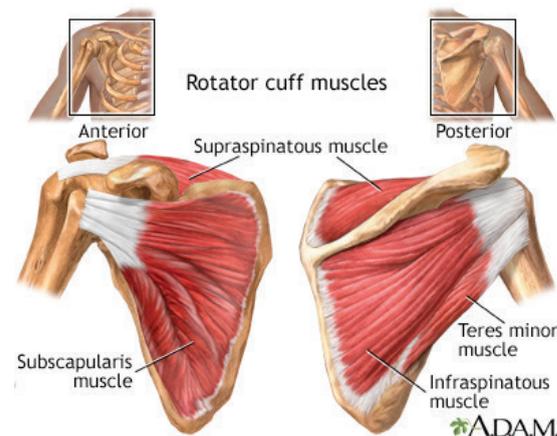
Adhesive capsulitis also known as frozen shoulder can impair movement and cause pain. This happens when the joint becomes irritated and the whole capsule of connective tissue around the joint tightens, limiting movement. Research has not determined the actual cause of frozen shoulder, but it usually happens after an initial shoulder injury such as a fall.

Physical therapy can help address any of these shoulder

injuries. Physical therapists will evaluate and determine which muscles and structures are involved. We have special tests we use to determine which diagnosis is likely the cause of pain or limitations. From the examination, physical therapists will prescribe strengthening and stretching exercises to address the deficits. Postural awareness exercises will also be important to further improve motion. There are many hands-on techniques like soft tissue massage and joint mobilizations that can be used to improve pain and joint mobility.

When there is an issue with your shoulder, it may impact

daily activities or major areas of your life. At WWSPT, we treat shoulder injuries often. As doctors of physical therapy, we are experts in assessing shoulder movement and pain and providing an individualized program for you to achieve your specific goals. We would love to help your shoulder be the best shoulder it can be!



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