



CAPE COD SPORTS MEDICINE INC.

ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

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IMPINGEMENT SHOULDER PAIN

With spring coming just around the corner, it's a good time to review overuse injuries to the shoulders. Generally, these injuries fall into three categories: Impingement Syndrome, Instability or Rotator Cuff tears. In this first article, we will discuss Impingement Syndrome. If you've developed shoulder pain that is worse when raising your arm, you may have this syndrome. It usually has an insidious onset, often associated with an activity that hasn't been done for a while such as turning over garden soil, throwing a ball, golfing or household repairs. Pain with overhead activities, shoulder stiffness or a dull pain even when your not using your shoulder are the most common symptoms.

The muscles and tendons around the shoulder allow you to move your shoulder in a variety of directions including lifting, swinging, pushing or pulling and reaching. As you raise your arm overhead, a narrow space in your shoulder called the subacromial bursa gets compressed. The bursa functions normally as a fluid filled sac that allow tendons to glide without rubbing up against each other. With overuse, this bursa swells to three times its' normal size and presses on the tendons and muscles causing inflammation and irritation. The combination of bursa swelling (bursitis) and tendon inflammation (tendonitis) is called Impingement Syndrome.

Treatment for impingement syndrome is "Active Rest". Avoid overhead activities. Ice initially to reduce inflammation followed by heat may speed your recovery. Your physician may prescribe non-steroidal anti-inflammatories. Do not stop moving your shoulder completely or a "frozen shoulder" will develop. Pendulum exercises listed below, keep your shoulder mobile without adding to the impingement.



Stir the pot: bend over a table and allow your affected arm to hang free. Make gentle circles with yourdangling straight arm as if stirring a pot.

Bowling: in the same position as above, allow your straight arm to swing from front to back, as if throwing a bowling ball.

Saw Wood: while standing upright, grasp your affected arm with your good arm and push forward and backward as if sawing a log.

Rock the baby: In the same position as above, grasp your affected arm and bring it across your body as if rocking a baby.

Exercises should be done for 10 minutes, 3 times a day. If the problem persists, see your doctor. Sometimes an injection of cortisone into the shoulder is needed to resolve the problem