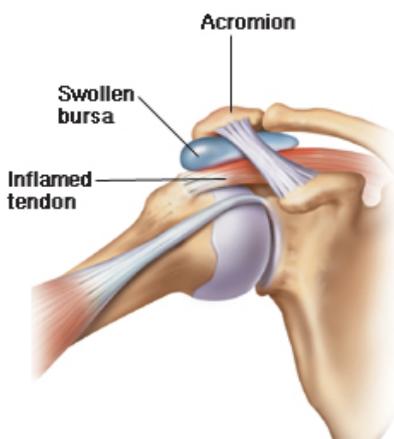


Shoulder Impingement

Known by a variety of names such as rotator cuff tendinitis, swimmers shoulder, throwers shoulder subacromial impingement or subacromial bursitis, this clinical syndrome occurs when the rotator cuff tendons become irritated and inflamed as they pass through the subacromial space.

This can be an overuse injury due to repetitive or prolonged strain on the rotator cuff tendons such as with overhead activities, pulling/pushing, lifting or repetitive reaching. It can also be the result of a direct blow or fall onto the point of the shoulder



forcing the head of the humerus upwards into the subacromial space creating a pinching effect on the rotator cuff tendon.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Depending on the severity, patients will often present with one or more of the following:

- Painful arc of movement (usually during movements above shoulder height)
- Difficulty reaching up behind back (i.e. females may struggle doing up their bra)
- Weakness of certain movements
- Loss of range of movement
- Inability to sleep on the affected shoulder
- Associated neck pain

TREATMENT

Physiotherapy is a vital tool for treating impingement syndrome. Some treatment techniques may include:

- **Soft tissue massage:** Targeted at tight, over worked muscles particularly at the back of the shoulder.
- **Activity Modification:** Avoiding aggravating positions such as repetitive overhead movements
- **Dry Needling/Acupuncture:** To loosen tight bands within overactive muscles
- **Rehabilitation** using specific strengthening to address weakness/muscle imbalance around the shoulder. (eg: rotator cuff strengthening / scapular retraction retraining)
- **Electrophysical therapy:** to assist with reducing inflammation and pain

To effectively treat this problem specific factors contributing to the problem must be addressed: Such issues include muscle weakness or incoordination, soft tissue tightness, impaired scapulohumeral rhythm and training errors.

In circumstances where conservative management fails to provide relief of symptoms there are alternative options such as cortisone injections, PRP (Platelet-rich plasma) and in more severe cases surgery.

Ross and Emma, the physiotherapists for **East's Rugby**, specialise in the treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. If you would like to make an appointment please contact us on **9328 3822**.

